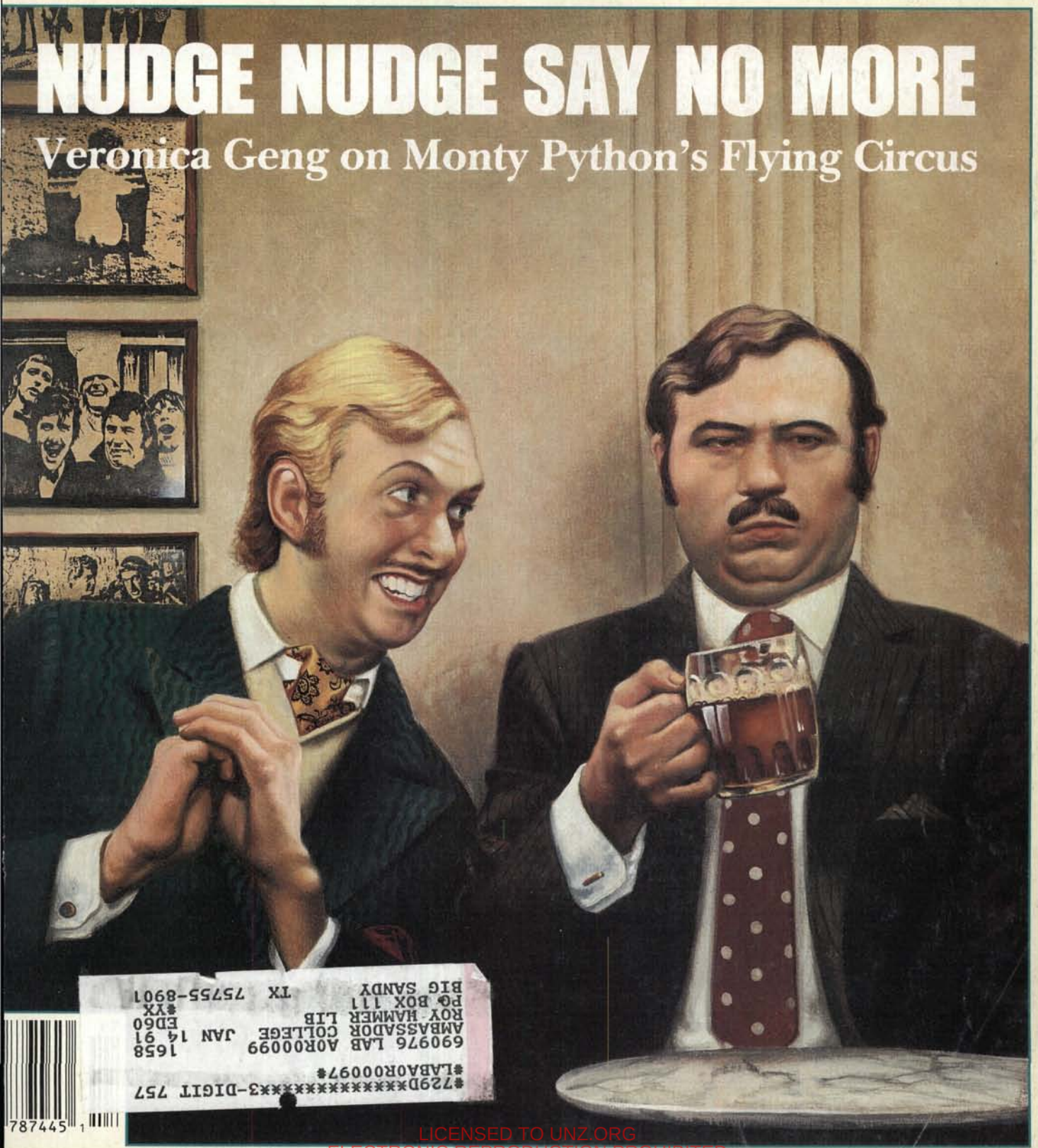
GEORGE & MIKHAIL & MAGGIE, BY FRED BARNES

APRIL 23, 1990 · $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Europe's worst writer · New York's best building · Italy's post-Communists

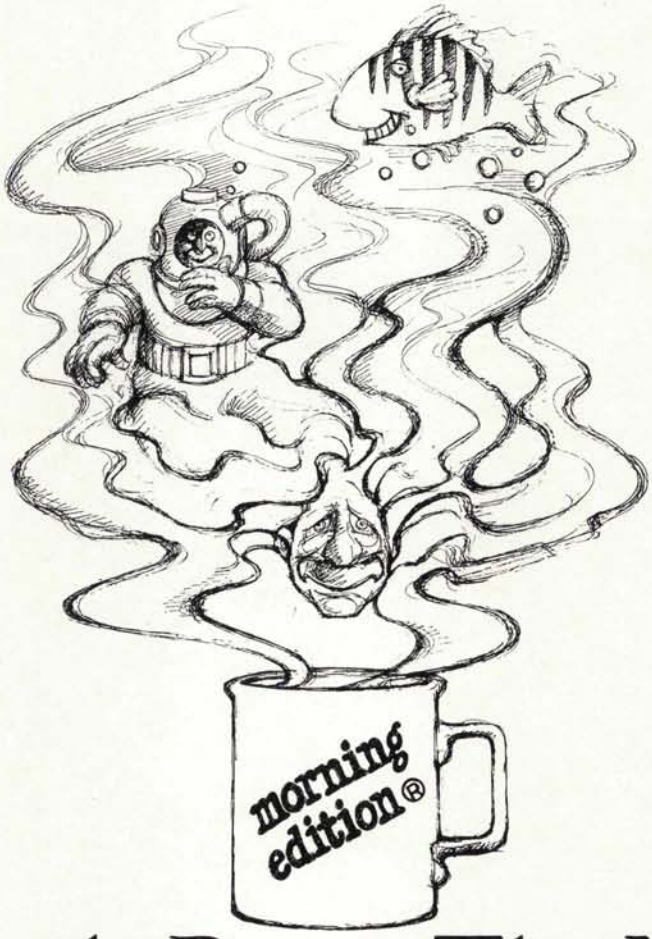


NUDGE NUDGE SAY NO MORE

Veronica Geng on Monty Python's Flying Circus

#729D**********3-DIGIT 757
#LABAOR00097#
1658
690976 LAB AOR00099 JAN 14 91
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE EDGO
ROY HAMMER LIB #YX
PO BOX 111
BIG SANDY TX 75755-8901
787445 1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Nobody Brews The News Like Morning Edition.

If the daily roll call of disasters is getting a little stale, take a fresh approach to the news with Morning Edition from National Public Radio.

Morning Edition is a stimulating blend of the day's most important stories, news analysis, sports, business, and features on science and the arts.

And with Morning Edition, you'll get the morning news with things you won't find anywhere else on the dial . . . intelligence, depth, and whimsy.

So get up on the Morning Edition side of bed. Before long, you won't want to start your day any other way.

morning edition®

Drink It In...This Is Radio News The Way It's Meant To Be Brewed.

Check local listings for your public radio station or call NPR at (202) 822-2323.

National Public Radio® News

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

[illegible] COLLEGE LIBRARY
Big Sandy, Texas

RECEIVED
APR 12 1990

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

APRIL 23, 1990

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 3,927

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
HENDRIK HERTZBERG

Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER

Managing Editor
DOROTHY WICKENDEN

Senior Editors
FRED BARNES, ANN HULBERT, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, MORTON KONDRACKE, ROBERT WRIGHT

Editor, New Republic Books (Basic Books)
BILL NEWLIN

Economics
ROBERT KUTTNER

Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN

Music
EDWARD ROTHSTEIN

Poetry
RICHARD HOWARD

Art
MARK STEVENS

Architecture
HERBERT MUSCHAMP

Contributing Editors
ROBERT COLES, JAMES K. GLASSMAN, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, VINT LAWRENCE, LOUIS MENAND, ADAM MICHNIK, ROBERT B. REICH, JONATHAN RIEDER, MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL, RICHARD L. STROUT, E. V. THAW, ANNE TYLER, NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN, MICHAEL WALZER, C. VANN WOODWARD

Associate Editor
JACOB WEISBERG

Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY

Assistant to the Editors
JUNE HALEY

Assistant Editors
KAREN LEHRMAN, LEONA HIRAOKA ROTH

Production Manager
BRUCE STEINKE

Assistant Production Manager
KRISTIN CONRADI

Production Associate
ERIC V. PETERSON

Assistant Literary Editor
SARA MOSLE

Reporter-Researchers
DANIEL GROSS, DAVID P. HAMILTON, WESTON KOSOVA, MARTIN WEISS

President
JEFFREY L. DEARTH

Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON

Associate Publisher
TOM HICKS

Controller
JEAN GANDY

Advertising Manager
JENNIFER BARRETT

Circulation Director
PATTY JONES

Accounting Manager
CHRISTINA R. OVERHOLSER

Advertising Assistant
DARLENE BUSCAGLIO

Accounting Assistant
JULIE HAWKINS

Circulation Assistant
PATTI NAJDA

Back Issues and Reception
CAROLYN PARHAM

Leadership Network Advertising
ROBERT E. SENNOTT JR.

Cover by Bryan Leister for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 32.

4 MICHAEL KINSLEY **TRB: REMOTE CONTROL** Why your cable TV bills keep going up.

6 CORRESPONDENCE Homage to Henry Fairlie, fairness in "homelands," &c.

7 THE EDITORS **BACK THE BALTICS** The Lithuanians deserve more support than the president has given them. **FOREIGN FADE** Democrats make mischief on help for Nicaragua and others. **NOTEBOOK** Pat Buchanan's tolerance, Flora Lewis's prescience, &c.

10 FRED BARNES **WHITE HOUSE WATCH: THE CLUB** The core of George Bush's foreign policy is chumminess with his fellow members of the Leaders' Club.

12 YASMINE ERGAS **NAME OF THE ROSSO** Italy's Communist Party gives itself a makeover.

14 MARK A. R. KLEIMAN **SNOWED IN** A cold-eyed analysis of why trying to keep cocaine out of the country is destined to prove futile.

16 ANDY STARK **TONGUE TIED** In a constitutional clash, Canadians' misplaying of the language card could finally push Quebecers out of the game.

19 EUGENE V. ROSTOW **BRICKS AND STONES** The controversy over Jewish settlements in the West Bank overlooks an important point: they're legal.

23 VLADIMIR TISMANEANU **BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS** In Romania a civil society is being born, and the new rallying cry is, "We won't get fooled again."

26 STANLEY KAUFFMANN **ON FILMS: SENSE AND SENSUALITY** Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* is a pointless charade.

28 HERBERT MUSCHAMP **ON ARCHITECTURE: WHEN THE CATHEDRAL TURNED BLACK** Why the CBS Building, now twenty-five years old, is the last great building built in New York.

32 VERONICA GENG **IT'S ...** *The Complete Monty Python's Flying Circus: All the Words* by Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin

34 BRAD LEITHAUSER **POEM** *North of Night*

36 STANISLAW BARANCZAK **VOLTAIRE'S VOMIT** *Hamletmachine and Other Texts for the Stage; The Battle: Plays, Prose, Poems: Explosion of a Memory: Writings* by Heiner Müller, edited and translated by Carl Weber

40 SVEN BIRKERTS **HIS MASTER'S VOICE** *Poems, 1959-1979; These Days* by Frederick Seidel

43 MARIANNE SZEGEDY-MASZAK **BUDAPEST DIARIST: SPRING CLEANING** Hungary votes.

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 202, Number 17, Issue 3,927, April 23, 1990. (Printed in the U.S. on April 4, 1990.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 8 & 15, July 9 & 16, July 30 & Aug. 6, Aug. 20 & 27, and Sept. 10 & 17, 1990) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $59.97; foreign, $89.97; Canada, $74.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). ©1990 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

Remote control

Do you get cable TV? More than half the country's households are now hooked up. What's happened to your bill recently? Mine's risen by almost half in the past couple of years—from $15 to $22 a month for basic, no-frills service. A year of cable service now costs more than a nice color television.

As of December 1986, Congress and the Federal Communications Commission "deregulated" the cable industry. That is, they forbade local governments from restricting cable rates, and made it virtually impossible to take away a cable franchise. Deregulation in general—of airlines, for example—has been a great success of free market economics. But cable deregulation suffers from a laughable flaw: cable systems aren't a free market. They're a government-granted monopoly. Whether cable needs to be a monopoly or always will be are open questions. Whether it's a monopoly now is indisputable (though the cable lobby preposterously disputes it). Of 9,000 or so cable markets in the country, half a dozen have more than one cable system. Besides raising their prices, cable companies have developed the sensitive, caring customer relations of a monopoly, too—reminiscent of the Telephone Company in the bad old days.

Congress and the FCC are now reconsidering their folly. Unfortunately, thanks largely to their very monopoly riches, cable operators have become a new wing of the business establishment and created a lobby as fat and powerful as the broadcasters, the phone companies, and others in the communications field. Cable has joined a long list of industries—from broadcasting back to the railroads in the last century—in which huge private fortunes have been made, not through any special capitalist fortitude or ingenuity, but simply by government fiat. In this case it's a two-step process. Local governments grant the franchise to well-connected citizens who either are fronting for or soon sell out to large cable chains, which then use their national clout in Washington to spring them from any promises they might have made to the locals.

Like most communications policy disputes, this one is an avalanche of thick documents in which lawyers for nervous companies with millions of dollars at stake bray unctuously about how their paramount concern is for the public interest. A government study last summer determined that in less than two years after deregulation, basic cable rates increased twenty-six to twenty-nine percent—four times the rate of inflation. Since the survey was voluntary and many cable companies didn't reply, there is reason to suspect this figure is low. The cable companies note in response that if you include premium services such as HBO, the increase was only fourteen percent. And if you figure it per-channel, there was no increase at all, thanks to added channels.

The price of premium services went down precisely because they're in competition with one another—HBO versus Showtime, etc. It's the basic service that's the monopoly. As for those extra channels, you can only watch one at a time. Most customers might not feel that the Shoelace Channel, the Herbal Tea Channel, and so on, are worth exactly as much as NBC, CNN, etc. In any event, the price of cable ought to be going down, not up, as the fixed costs can be spread over more and more subscribers.

The cable companies offer fancy studies by rent-an-experts to "prove" that they actually have no monopoly power; that deregulation has had no effect on the market value of cable franchises; that this market value doesn't reflect an appreciation of monopoly profits. These dense arguments bring to mind Groucho Marx's famous line, "Who are you going to believe: me or your own two eyes?"

In 1983, the year before the deregulation law was enacted, buyers were paying less than $1,000 per subscriber for cable systems. By last year prices were up to around $2,600 per subscriber. Now system sales have ground to a halt, and the stock price of publicly traded cable companies is down, pending resolution of the new regulation debate. That also shows that price regulation affects a company's value. (And—really, you guys—how could it not? If regulation has no financial effect, what are we fighting about? It's this kind of logical inconsistency that tends to get overlooked in those thick, argumentative legal briefs.)

Now, $2,600 per subscriber does not prove that current profits are the result of a monopoly. What does is that $2,600 is three or four times what it would cost to build a cable system from scratch. That alternative doesn't exist—you can't just show up in town and start stringing wires—which is what makes the wires that are already there so remarkably valuable.

Barry Kramer, a stock analyst at Goldman Sachs, calculated recently that the price being paid for cable systems in the merger market (before the current freeze) reflected an assumption that basic cable rates will double over the next decade. That's what people are counting on when they shell out $2,600 or more per subscriber. But Kramer also calculated that investors in publicly traded cable companies could count on a reasonable return even if "onerous" reregulation held them to a two percent annual rate hike. So don't lose any sleep on their behalf.

The draft bill now in front of the Senate Communications subcommittee would permit cities once again to set rates for their cable franchises if there is no competition. Competition could be another widely available cable system or some new technology such as a direct-to-the-home microwave network. The mere fact that there are a few regular broadcast stations in town would not be considered effective competition, as it is under current law.

The bill also would take steps to promote genuine competition, which everyone agrees is superior to regulation if it can be made to happen. The most likely competitors for cable are local phone companies. Over the next few decades they will be rewiring homes anyway with fiber-optic cables capable of carrying phone calls, television, and much more. Right now the phone companies are banned from offering cable TV service. The draft Senate bill would retain the ban, but would make clear that phone companies can lease their lines to anyone else, who could compete against the local cable monopoly without getting permission from the city. It's not clear, though, whether the phone companies really aspire to compete against the cable monopolies or to join them.

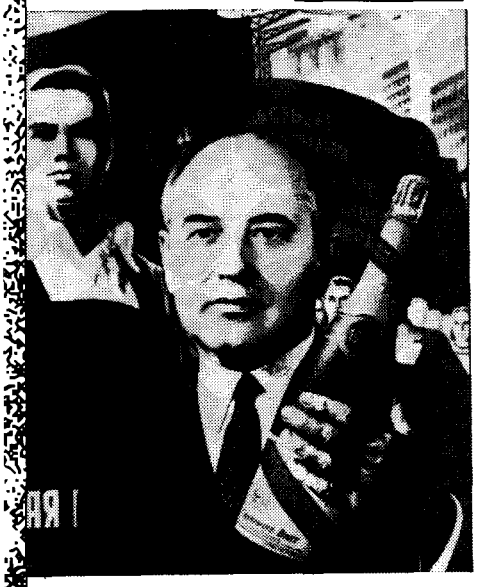
The cable industry is increasingly concentrated and interrelated. For example Time Warner, which owns the second-largest collection of cable systems, also owns HBO and a chunk of Turner Broadcasting, which owns CNN. To prevent the cable industry from smothering new delivery systems in their cribs, the draft bill would require programmers owned by cable companies to offer programming to rivals on a non-discriminatory basis. The cable lobby argues that "vertical integration"—when owners of the wire also have a financial stake in what goes on it—is a terrible danger in the case of phone companies, but a wonderful opportunity in the case of cable companies.

Cable reregulation will be debated in Congress over the next few months. You can watch the show on C-SPAN—if you can still afford it.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FREE



CONTENTS

Graham Swift Looking for Jiri Wolf	9
Neal Ascherson The Borderlands	41
Michael Ignatieff Turia	65
Patrick Zachmann The Death of Merab Kostava	79
Victoria Tokareva Centre of Gravity	91
Ludmilla Petrushevskaya Our Circle	107
Inka Ruka Those from my Village	119
The State of Europe: Christmas Eve, 1989	125
Josef Skvorecky	127
George Steiner	129
Jurek Becker	133
Hans Magnus Enzenberger	136
Werner Kratschell	143
Isaiah Berlin	148
Andrei Sinyavsky	151
Abraham Brumberg	155
Noel Annan	158
Gunter Kunert	161
Tony Benn	163
Czeslaw Milosz	164
Ivan Klima	166
Stephen Spender	168
Mircea Dinescu	171
Yuri Ribchinsky Wedding Day	175
Mikhail Steblin-Kamensky The Siege of Leningrad	181
Vladimir Filonov Dying Village	191
Joseph Brodsky Democracy	199
Jonathan Raban New World (Part Two)	235
Notes on Contributors	255

ANTI-SEMITISM, REVENGE KILLINGS AND THE UGLY, UGLY FACE OF NATIONALISM: IS THIS THE NEW EUROPE?

How does a 'Literary' magazine respond to one of the most momentous times in European history? This—on 1 December 1989—is what Granta did:

■ It sent Graham Swift to Prague and Neal Ascherson to Poland.

■ It asked the Czech writer Josef Skvorecky to tell us what it felt like watching the collapse of the regime that had driven him into exile (a dark, bitter testimonial).

■ It asked the Romanian poet Mircea Dinescu to tell us what it was like—while Ceausecu was killing people in the streets of Timisoara—to live imprisoned in his own house by eighteen Securitate.

■ It asked Stephen Spender, observer of three political generations, what it was like to watch a fourth generation fight its way to power.

■ As an introduction to Granta we are offering this issue free to new subscribers.

GRANTA

OUR TERMS: I would like to subscribe to Granta for one year—four issues of 256 pages each—at the introductory rate of $24.95 and receive 'New Europe' free—a saving of $19.80 from the price of those same issues bought in the shops.

❑ One year plus New Europe free ($24.95).

❑ Please also send me Salman Rushdie's limited edition commemorative pamphlet 'Is Nothing Sacred?' ($3.00 extra enclosed).

Foreign subscriptions: Canada, please add $4; others add $8.

SAVE 44%

Total amount enclosed: $_____ NR4

Form of payment: ❑ Cheque ❑ MasterCard ❑ Visa ❑ Amex

Card no._____

Exp. Date_____Signature_____

Name_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Fairlie magic

To the editors:

O Captain! My Captain! I spilled great tears on Vint Lawrence's moving rendition of Henry Fairlie's "homicidal ploughboy's grin" ("Henry Fairlie," March 26). It was very un-Fairlie-like of me; Henry probably would not have approved.

To many of us west of the Potomac, Fairlie was often the man who broadcast that all was well at TNR when the rest of you tilted at windmills or just wind. This was the man around whom you grew in perspective and content, maybe even unwittingly. His influence helped TNR to grow out of the sixties and seventies, where some journals got stuck. And moving into an impoverished age of "I do not recall" and "Read my lips" oratory, he helped avert the oxymoron in "Washington journalism." I was unprepared for the full realization of how Henry's magic had affected me, too, until I grieved for him as I would for family.

Suspend his effigy from your lamps; scan his picture into your PCs; record his voice on your answering machines. Read your own "Fairlie Sampler" before you write. I want you to keep his spirit breathing down your collars.

MARK G. ROBERTS
Dallas, Texas

Greater expectations

To the editors:

Let's talk about double standards vis-à-vis German reunification and its ramifications ("Together Again," March 12).

Case No. 1: The time is now. The expelled have been denied entry to their "homeland" and their homes. By some standards they have been refugees for more than forty years, ever since their side lost the war they started. But everyone—or almost everyone—agrees that they have no right to return, that they must not think of themselves as refugees, and that the borders established at that time must remain intact. Both the United States and its old adversary, the Soviet Union, are convinced that nothing must alter the new, more secure borders for the victor. So Germans expelled from what is now Poland and what used to be Germany must not think that they have any right to reclaim their old territory and possessions.

Case No. 2: The time is now. The expelled have been denied entry to their "homeland" and their homes. By their own and many others' standards they have been refugees for more than forty years, ever since their side lost the war they started. But everyone—or almost everyone—agrees that they have the right to return, that they remain refugees until they do, and that the borders established at the time must not remain intact. Both the United States and its old adversary, the Soviet Union, are convinced that something must be done to alter the new, more secure borders for the victor. So the Palestinians expelled from what is now Israel and used to be British Mandated Territory have been encouraged to think that they and their descendents have every right to reclaim their territory and possessions.

The two cases underscore the fact that what is expected of Israel is not expected of any other state in the world, now or in the past. By any standard, that's called discrimination.

SALLY F. ZERKER
Downsview, Ontario

Egypt's revolution

To the editors:

It is hard to understand why TNR lashed out at Egypt in the editorial "Dead Man's Peace" (February 26), as a result of the terrorist attack on the Israeli tourists. No one disputed the fact that this criminal act was perpetrated by non-Egyptians or the relentless seriousness with which the Egyptian authorities have been pursuing the investigation of the crime. The Egyptian elite, who were particularly targeted by your editorial, have been in the forefront attacking the crime and denouncing any motivation behind it. Even the most militant fundamentalist group in Egypt unequivocally condemned the attack as "a perfidious crime." But most significant was the spontaneous reaction of the ordinary men and women in Egypt, with people traveling on the desert road helping the wounded Israelis and transporting them in their cars, and with soldiers readily donating their blood for them.

To call our peace with Israel a "dead man's peace" is, therefore, wide of the mark. This would also ignore the sacrifices that Egypt suffered for ten years of uncompromising steadfastness to the Peace Treaty with Israel before relations were restored with eighteen Arab countries. But much more important is the determination of President Mubarak to widen the area of peace with Israel to include the Palestinians and twenty more Arab countries.

Equally surprising is your allegation

continued on page 42

"Drug Legalization Is Gaining Converts and Respectability."

—*NEWSWEEK*, Dec. 25, 1989

. . . and one of the main reasons is the Cato Institute's provocative study, "Thinking about Drug Legalization," by James Ostrowski.

"Ostrowski dares to think the unthinkable. He presents a case for legalization of drugs that clearly demands an answer."
—MARTIN WOLF, *The Financial Times*

"According to Ostrowski, the lives of at least 8,250 people who die every year—*not from drugs but from the war on drugs*—would be saved." —JOSEPH SPEAR, syndicated columnist

"The Ostrowski study comprises some 60 pages of statistics, analysis, projections, and well-reasoned argument."
—WILLIAM RASPBERRY, *The Washington Post*

"Ostrowski's report, one as provocative as any ever published by the lively Cato Institute, demands a response from those favoring the drug status quo."
—SHELBY SCATES, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

"Thinking about Drug Legalization"
by James Ostrowski, $4.00
Cato Institute, 224 Second Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

CATO INSTITUTE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 23, 1990

BACK THE BALTICS

The atmosphere in Lithuania is one of fear and intimidation. The reaction in Washington is not so much one of prudence as of pusillanimity. Mikhail Gorbachev is showing force, rolling tanks through the streets and flying helicopter gunships about. He is also using force, sending Soviet troops to block Lithuanian borders, seize Lithuanian conscripts who have deserted the Soviet army, and occupy a prosecutor's office and the country's main newspaper offices and printing plant. At any moment troops may occupy radio and television stations and the parliament building. Gorbachev has not used massive force—no one has been killed—but he shows every sign of readiness to use it if that is the only way to put down the Lithuanian independence movement. Chillingly, he has expelled almost all foreign reporters from Lithuania, much as Poland did as part of martial law. No American, and only one English-speaker, remains. Back in Moscow, the Soviet media have largely been toeing the official Party line, portraying Lithuania's mild-mannered leaders as dangerous demagogues.

What Gorbachev is doing is at the very least a violation of the principle of glasnost and of his professions of belief in democracy. For the Lithuanians—and for the neighboring Latvians and Estonians, too—the primal experience of life under communism has been the suppression of their national identities and of their national sovereignties. So it is not surprising that for these men and women the real meaning of perestroika is their release from bondage to the Russians. George Bush seemingly does not understand this—or, worse, he is willing to pretend, with Gorbachev, that it is not so. As Columbia University's Alexander J. Motyl has pointed out in the *Los Angeles Times*, on at least two occasions Washington seems to have sanctioned Soviet power over peoples who wanted to be free of it. The first was when the administration more than hinted that Soviet intervention in Romania would be acceptable, which the Kremlin couldn't have interpreted as other than a recognition of the legitimacy of its hegemony in Eastern Europe. The second was when Bush and Secretary of State James Baker robustly applauded the Soviet invasion of Azerbaijan. If that isn't a precedent for an imposition of brutal force in Lithuania, nothing is.

The Lithuanians' demand is entirely just. They have demonstrated through free elections that they want to be independent of the Soviet Union. They have said through their elected representatives that they are willing to negotiate the manner and timing of independence. Gorbachev himself has acknowledged that Lithuania was illegitimately deprived of its sovereignty through the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact. Yet he is resisting

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

negotiations and is attempting to force Lithuania to accept a drawn-out procedure that may or may not lead to independence. The procedure, hastily pushed into law, would impose a five-year waiting period on any republic seeking to secede and would require a two-thirds vote of the population, plus approval of the Soviet legislature. Lithuania could muster a two-thirds margin now, but Latvia and Estonia—which have been systematically repopulated with Russian nationals—probably couldn't. What's more, the requirement for legislative approval gives Moscow a final veto of any republic's desire for freedom.

Soviet diplomats tell the press—and Gorbachev, presumably, is telling George Bush—that the Baltics will get their independence eventually, but the Soviet government has more urgent priorities whose success would be jeopardized by the disorderly dissolution of the Soviet internal empire. It's said that Gorbachev is preparing a dramatic and potentially disruptive free market economic initiative and that politically he cannot afford the added crisis of nationalist agitation. If he were to let Lithuania go, it's argued, he will have to let the other Baltic states go, and secession fever will sweep Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and, ultimately, the Ukraine. Right-wing Communists and/or the military will move against him, and that will be the end of perestroika, glasnost, and, perhaps, the promise of permanent peace between East and West.

The Bush administration has obviously accepted this argument. On March 27 Bush abruptly stopped protesting what the White House previously, and accurately, had called the "pattern of intimidation" in Lithuania. Bush then wrote Gorbachev, his spokesman said, that he was "not trying to make things difficult" for the Soviet leader. The administration has clammed up about Gorbachev's threats of violence and has put out the word that there will be consequences for U.S.-Soviet relations only if actual violence occurs. Bush changed his policy after getting word from Margaret Thatcher and Senator Edward Kennedy, who'd talked to Gorbachev, that the Soviet president was irritated at Western criticism of his tactics.

We do not fault the administration for viewing the Lithuanian situation as delicate and for weighing the effect of its words and tactics in light of basic U.S. foreign policy objectives. However, it is now confusing everyone about what its policy is. Bush reportedly told one congressional delegation that he would be willing to sacrifice Lithuanian independence rather than lose the chance for progress toward glasnost and perestroika. Other administration officials—unnamed, naturally—have been quoted in the press as saying the same thing. But what are glasnost and perestroika if they do not permit national self-determination by a people placed under imperial domination in a pact between two monsters?

Unfortunately, Bush implied in his policy toward China that monstrousness need not be a bar to good relations with a powerful dictatorship. That approach didn't work with Beijing, and there is no reason to suppose it would work with Moscow. In Lithuania the position of the United States should not be that the United States will react negatively only if Gorbachev commits a Tiananmen Square in Vilnius. Bush's stance, public and private, should be that the United States expects the Soviet Union both to live up to its promises of internal democracy and to proceed with good faith efforts toward self-determination and independence. Independence does not have to come overnight, but the administration should be urging that Gorbachev respond in kind to Lithuanian offers of negotiation. Gorbachev should be made to understand not only that U.S.-Soviet cooperation absolutely will be set back if he resorts to violence, but also that it will be set back just as surely if decisive steps are not taken toward independence for the Baltics.

We think that Bush should have announced immediately upon Lithuania's declaration of independence a willingness to recognize the new regime. This could have been done in a way that was firm without being "provocative"—because there is nothing "provocative" about consistency. For fifty years the United States has formally recognized Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia as independent countries (even if the recognition followed the failure of the West to do anything about the Hitler-Stalin bargain). For fifty years the State Department has continued to accept the credentials of the diplomatic representatives of an independent Lithuania and its neighbors. Maybe this was just the respect that hypocrisy pays to decency. Still, it secured for the Lithuanians (and the other Balts) some hope, and for the United States some bits of honor. To have withdrawn this recognition from Lithuania now that it means something was an act of timid vacillation, not of statesmanlike steadiness.

It may be too late to remedy this error without compounding it by drawing attention to the administration's shilly-shallying, but Washington needs to stop behaving as if the new government in Vilnius did not exist. The administration needs not merely to threaten Moscow with negative consequences—loss of technology and credits—if it refuses to move swiftly toward establishing the modalities for independence for the Baltics. There is room as well for positive suggestions to help Gorbachev and those countries achieve the end they claim to agree upon. The United States could recommend mediating arenas—such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe—and also offer to give Most Favored Nation trade status and observer status in international organizations to the Soviet Union and to the Baltic states individually, if they want it. And we can urge the Baltics to accept transition procedures and temporary confederation and/or commonwealth status. Some of this friendly advice can be private and quiet, but the principles should be clear: that the Baltic peoples have every right to be free, and that the Soviet Union cannot be at once a democracy and an empire.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOREIGN FADE

All during the era of U.S. aid to the contras, Democratic leaders in Congress insisted that the way to build democracy in Central America was not through military intervention but through economic development and diplomacy. Now, thanks partly to diplomacy and partly to military intervention, democracy has arrived in Nicaragua and Panama. Economic aid is urgently needed to keep it afloat, and the administration has proposed an $800 million emergency aid package. With Democratic leadership support, the House overwhelmingly rejected efforts to cut the amount. In the Senate, however, top party leaders, including Majority Leader George Mitchell and Appropriations Committee chairman Robert Byrd, are putting up roadblocks to the aid package—a package that, after all, represents nothing more or less than the policy these very Democratic leaders have been advocating for years. It's enough to make one wonder if their previous advocacy reflected not so much a real commitment to democracy as a commitment to finding any club with which to beat the former Republican policy of military aid about the head.

The Democratic senators are making no legitimate arguments on the merits. The money is to come not from domestic spending or higher taxes, but from the defense budget—another step these senators have long favored. Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that handled the aid bill, said it called for "too much money for countries of slight economic, security, and foreign policy importance to U.S. national interests." Byrd wants any money saved on defense to go first to West Virginia miners affected by clean air legislation. Mitchell made a ridiculous argument that the money for Panama and Nicaragua had to be justified in terms of a global five-year plan for all foreign aid.

There are legitimate policy fights to be fought between the administration and Congress over how aid should be spent and where. As the human rights group Freedom House has argued, lessons learned in El Salvador—such as the desirability of channeling aid through local mayors rather than the national government—ought to be applied wherever possible in Latin America and Africa.

Right now, however, Nicaragua is bankrupt and destitute after ten years of Sandinista mismanagement and U.S. economic and military pressure. Violeta Chamorro takes office on April 25. The entire Nicaraguan economy needs to be rebuilt. Most urgently, the Nicaraguan planting season for coffee and cotton begins in late April, and there is now no money to lend to farmers to buy seed. Mitchell, in effect, is blocking Nicaraguans from their chance to feed themselves and denying Chamorro an opportunity to make a good start on democratic governance. Panama, a potentially self-sufficient country, is still reeling economically from plunder by Manuel Noriega and economic sanctions leveled against him by the United States. Its economy needs a jump start so it can pay interest on debts and provide credit to businesses to bring the unemployment rate down from its current twenty-five percent.

Both Chamorro and Panamanian President Guillermo Endara have appealed to Congress to pass this aid. What do Mitchell, Byrd, and Leahy want? Anti-American riots?

NOTEBOOK

LITERARY QUIZ: Here is the table of contents from a recently published book. The author's name is: (a) Martin Heidegger. (b) Phil Donahue. (c) Rod Serling. (d) Andrei Gromyko. (e) None of the above. See end of Notebook for answer.

CONTENTS

ONE

1 • Peaks and Valleys, 11
2 • Wilderness, 26
3 • Renewal, 46

TWO

4 • Family, 79
5 • Religion, 88
6 • Teachers, 94
7 • Struggle, 103
8 • Wealth, 109

THREE

9 • Purpose, 117
10 • Time, 121
11 • Temperance, 127
12 • Reading, 136
13 • Conversation, 141
14 • Memory, 147
15 • Thinking, 153
16 • Recreation, 159
17 • Illness, 167
18 • Tension, 174

FOUR

19 • Risks, 185
20 • Politics, 198
21 • Power, 204
22 • Speaking, 210
23 • Television, 218
24 • Privacy, 224
25 • Pat, 230
26 • Friends, 238
27 • Enemies, 245
28 • Media, 252
29 • Campaigning, 263
30 • Staff, 270
31 • Governing, 278
32 • Pragmatism, 285
33 • Silence, 291

FIVE

34 • Philosophy, 297
35 • Causes, 306
36 • Geopolitics, 313
37 • Decisions, 331
38 • War, 337
39 • Peace, 346

SIX

40 • Twilight, 359

INDEX, 371

UNCORDIALLY UNINVITED: One hundred and fifty states were represented at the festivities celebrating the independence of Namibia in early March. The one state expressly not invited was the State of Israel. Perhaps this was out of deference to Yasir Arafat, who was addressed by his hosts in Windhoek, the Namibian capital, as the president of Palestine: two fantasies in four words. Whatever the reason for the decision to exclude the Israelis, it shows that President Sam Nujoma and his SWAPO comrades haven't yet heard that the more practical governments in Africa have revived their relations with Israel—which they had severed in order to pursue another fantasy, that of Arab development aid. In Namibia's cravenness to the Palestinians, as in its belief that its new society will actually benefit from Arab help, it is already out of step with most of independent Africa. But in one other way, at least, it is following the established model: among the first official acts of postcolonial Namibia was an appropriation of some $10 million to build an Olympic-size swimming pool and a golf course for the Cabinet.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HETERO-FASCISM NOT A PROBLEM IN AMERIKA, EXPERT CLAIMS: When people get het up about something, they tend to throw around words like "fascist" rather loosely. Patrick J. Buchanan is het up about a proposal to have the Justice Department keep track of hate crimes. "While defacing a synagogue with swastikas qualifies as a hate crime," Buchanan writes in the March 1990 issue of his newsletter *Patrick J. Buchanan From The Right*, "the homo-fascist assault on St. Patrick's Cathedral, where sodomites desecrated the host at Communion, would not." Two lines later he adds: "One motive in sifting out from the data, crimes against homosexuals, blacks, etc., is to bolster the big lie that the United States is *Amerika*, i.e. a nation where fascism and white racism are rampant." So here's the deal: it's OK to say that fascism is rampant, as long as you use the proper prefix.

THANKS FOR THE TIP, FLORA:
"Tension is mounting in Lithuania."

—First line of a Flora Lewis column published in *The New York Times* on April 3, two weeks after Mikhail Gorbachev ordered Lithuanians to turn in their firearms, a week and a half after Soviet tanks rolled past the Lithuanian parliament building, one week after Soviet paratroopers invaded hospitals to arrest Lithuanian deserters from the Soviet army, four days after Soviet forces took over the state prosecutor's office in Vilnius, and three days after Gorbachev warned that a failure by Lithuania to repeal its declaration of independence could have "grave consequences for all of us."

WORTH WAITING FOR: New York literary circles have been abuzz lately with warnings that consolidation in the publishing industry has left little room for books of great intellectual merit but marginal commercial value. Rest assured that if these fears prove warranted, the Washington publishing community stands ready to pick up the slack. Congressional Quarterly Press has just published *The Presidential Odyssey of John Glenn*, a gripping account of Glenn's failure to get out of the starting blocks back in 1984 (or was it 1980?). In an enticing preface, the author, University of Rochester political scientist Richard Fenno Jr., notes that the book "examines a number of relatively unexplored questions concerning presidential nomination campaigns. For example, it pays more attention to a *losing* nomination campaign than political scientists (or journalists) usually do." Quite so. What's more: it pays inordinate attention to a politician who has failed not only to become president, but to become significant in any other respect, excepting embroilment in the occasional savings and loan scandal. Fenno gently concedes toward the end of the book that Glenn hasn't exactly been a dynamic congressional leader and wonders why not. "The answer may be that political leadership in the Senate may require some attitudes and actions that may not fit easily with those ideas about politics that have superintended his career so far." Translation: Glenn just doesn't get it. You might wonder why a reputable political scientist would spend much time chronicling the adventures of a dim-bulb Midwestern senator with subzero charisma. The answer is that in this great nation, there's always a pretty good chance that such a senator will hit the political jackpot. Fenno's previous book, published by CQ Press in early 1989, was: *The Making of a Senator: Dan Quayle.*

ANSWER: (e). But don't worry, you can figure it out, if you haven't already. Hint: He's back. He's always back. Other hint: Part four, chapter 25.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

THE CLUB

By Fred Barnes

On February 22 President Bush put in a phone call to Tokyo to Toshiki Kaifu, the prime minister of Japan. Bush had met Kaifu once (when Kaifu visited Washington briefly last September) and liked him. But they weren't exactly pals, and Bush had a scheme to correct that. Four days earlier Kaifu had led his Liberal Democratic Party to a surprisingly strong showing in the Japanese parliamentary election. So Bush was ostensibly calling to congratulate him on his victory. After chitchat about the election, Bush got down to business. Why don't we get together the weekend of March 2 and 3 in Palm Springs, California? Kaifu said sure.

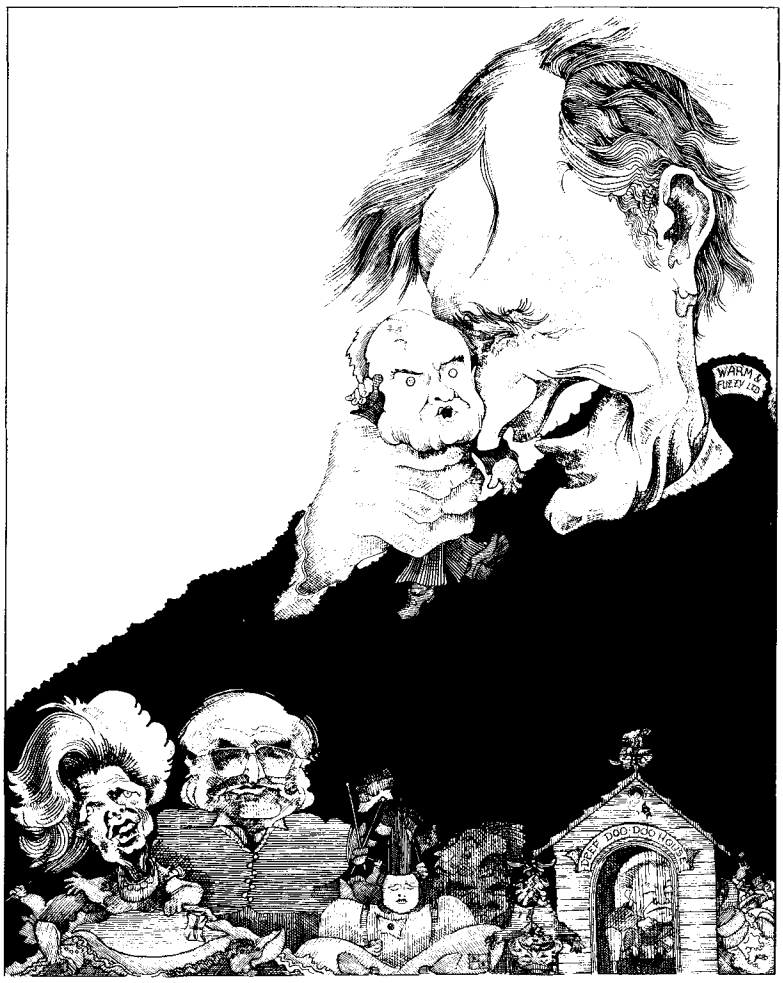
Bush hadn't told his aides that he planned to arrange a quickie American-Japanese summit. In fact, his decision to call Tokyo was so spontaneous that White House officials had to scramble to find an interpreter. (Bush neither speaks nor understands Japanese; Kaifu understands but doesn't speak English.) Bush had been intrigued by Kaifu's comment at their meeting in Washington that Japan would become an "import superpower." But what prompted the phone call was Bush's realization that Kaifu, having won an election, would be in office for months, maybe years. "The president wanted to treat Kaifu the exact same way he treats the other major allies," says a Bush aide. "The next thing you know, we're all in Palm Springs."

Kaifu had joined the club of world leaders, and this made all the difference to Bush. Unlike Ronald Reagan, Bush loves frequent, first-name contact with club members—Maggie, Brian, François, Helmut, even Mikhail and Xiaoping. During Polish Premier Tadeusz

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mazowiecki's trip to Washington in March, Bush telephoned German Chancellor Helmut Kohl three times to iron out German-Polish difficulties. "He likes to carry out his administration's diplomacy himself," says a senior official. "He doesn't delegate a lot of it. [Other leaders] react to the fact that George Bush is a thoughtful, sensible, nice guy. His personality is an instrument of national security policy."

Bush is also solicitous and sometimes deferential to club members. On April 13 and 14 he'll meet with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Bermuda. This wasn't specifically designed to help Thatcher during her time of troubles. But if she benefits politically, fine. Bush didn't insist that Thatcher come to Washington. "The president likes reciprocity," says an aide. "He didn't want to give the impression she was always coming to him." Robert Blackwill, a National Security Council official, suggested Bermuda. Bush, says an official, "works very hard to avoid the presence of an imperial president." He usually succeeds.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Communist reformers are accorded modified club privileges. They aren't friendly allies, but Bush can do business with them. Keeping on their good side is, by Bush's calculation, normally in America's interest. Before his inauguration Bush expressed a desire to sit down with aging Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, an old pal. Bush said privately that the funeral of Japanese Emperor Hirohito would give him an opportunity to drop by Beijing. It did. That was February 1989. In June the Deng regime massacred students in Tiananmen Square. Still, at his press conference on June 5, Bush balked at blaming Deng. He didn't want to jump to an unpleasant conclusion about a fellow club member. Instead, Bush noted that Deng had "moved China towards openness, towards democracy, towards reform." Later Bush sent two high-level missions to China and vetoed a bill (granting asylum to Chinese students) that Deng and his associates disliked.

There's a lesson in the go-easy posture toward Deng: tolerance may not work with Communist leaders, even reformers. Bush reckoned the absence of overt American pressure and the renewal of ties to Chinese leaders would aid democratization and reform. He was wrong. The Chinese did not match his kindness by ending repression. Nevertheless, on March 27 Bush decided to take the same tack publicly with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev on Lithuania.

That morning Bush conferred with Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater and Brent Scowcroft, the national security adviser, in the Oval Office. Fitzwater complained that he was running out of ways to escalate criticism of Soviet moves against Lithuanian independence. Scowcroft agreed this was a problem. It would be best, he said, to stop the escalation and keep the American response low-key and steady. Bush agreed. It wasn't that he wanted to make Fitzwater's job easier. By March 27 the president knew Gorbachev was mad about American criticism. Gorbachev said the attacks were undermining his efforts at perestroika and bolstering Soviet hard-liners.

Bush had gotten wind of Gorbachev's complaint the day before. Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts met with Gorbachev for seventy-five minutes on March 26, and American Embassy officials relayed to Washington what Gorbachev said. He told Kennedy that Bush and other Western leaders were violating their promise not to take advantage of problems facing the Soviet Union as he carried out his reform program. Gorbachev said that if criticism by Bush persisted, he might be forced to reverse the positive trend in American-Soviet relations. A similar warning was given in Moscow to retired Admiral William Crowe, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It too was conveyed to the White House. The result was that at his daily briefing on March 27 (and thereafter) Fitzwater, rather than criticize, went limp. Then on March 28 Bush got an earful from Thatcher in a phone conversation. She'd telephoned Gorbachev earlier that day,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heard his indignant protest, and repeated it to Bush.

Among the White House staff there wasn't a peep of dissent. But on March 29 House Republican Whip Newt Gingrich raised objections. He and other GOP leaders met with Bush in the Cabinet Room for a legislative strategy session. Gingrich said the administration wasn't applying enough pressure on the Soviets. "OK," Bush shot back, "what would you do?" For starters, Gingrich said, you ought to meet with four House members who visited Lithuania recently. "How about at 11:15?" Bush said. He had already scheduled the session with the four, but Gingrich didn't know this. He was surprised by Bush's response and never got his argument back on track. When Gingrich finished, Bush said he had two concerns. First, the focus should be on Moscow versus Vilnius, not Moscow versus Washington. Soviet hard-liners could use interference by Washington as a "pretext" to crush Lithuania, Bush said. Second, Bush said he's haunted by the Soviet crackdown on Hungary in 1956. He doesn't want a repeat in Lithuania. "You can be very moralistic and they get shot," Bush said. Gingrich later told reporters Bush had persuaded him. This earned him brownie points at the White House. At the next morning's senior staff meeting, chief of staff John Sununu praised Gingrich for falling into line.

Representative Christopher Cox, a California Republican, wasn't as malleable. At the 11:15 a.m. session, he urged Bush to recognize the new Lithuanian government. By not doing so, the president was giving Gorbachev more rope to play with than he'd expected. Gorbachev has found himself with leeway to intimidate Lithuanian leaders or use military force, Cox declared. Bush didn't buy that. Neither did Scowcroft. One of them—Cox says he doesn't remember which one—replied, "Gorbachev is the best thing we've got going over there." Instead of zinging Gorbachev, we need to support him. Another White House official says, "We can't imagine another Soviet leader doing what he's doing." Given the good things, his refusal to allow Lithuania to secede is tolerable.

Still, Bush wants to influence Gorbachev on Lithuania without jeopardizing their relationship. He's doing it privately, as he does with Chinese leaders. To make his position clear—that a military crackdown will have repercussions in Washington—Bush sent Gorbachev a letter on March 30. Scowcroft told other White House officials that Bush was tough as nails in the letter, but they were skeptical. That isn't Bush's style in dealing with Gorbachev. A letter was probably better than a phone call. Aides recommended against telephoning because Bush might get warm and chatty in talking to a fellow leader. The message, tough or mild, would be blurred.

World leaders often wander off the subject. Who's to stop them? Bush and Kaifu devoted the last session in Palm Springs to a discussion of Kaifu's campaign tactics. Several Kaifu aides had dozed in the earlier sessions, but they perked up during this one. Bush was fascinated with the story of Kaifu's comeback in the election. Kaifu loved telling it. At a press conference afterward, Bush said, "Mr. Prime Minister, Toshiki, my friend, thank you for coming." "George, thank you very much," Kaifu replied. With Bush's help, Kaifu had been inducted into the club. •

Post-communism, Italian style.

NAME OF THE ROSSO

By Yasmine Ergas

Those who seek to change their names inevitably arouse suspicion. We are reluctant to concede the playfulness of shifting self-definitions: we want to know who it is that stands before us. And so it is with political parties. We like their names to tell us who they are, where they come from, and where they may be going. Western Communists, for instance, used to be clearly recognizable, proudly proclaiming themselves as such and choosing symbols—red flags, hammers and sickles, raised fists—that unequivocably affirmed their faith. But the turmoil in the Communist world is leading to a reshuffling of identities. Thus, at a congress held in Bologna in March, the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) decided to change its name and the nature of the party organization.

Unlike most people who undergo similar operations, the Italian Communist Party has not yet found a new appellation, nor has it fully defined its destination. In a memorable passage of his three-hour keynote address to the congress, the Party secretary, Achille Occhetto, described the relationship between the Party and its name in terms only linguistic philosophers would find familiar: "It would certainly not be worth destroying the 'thing' to change the name . . . but it is also not worth destroying the 'thing' to save the name." Occhetto appears to have been saying that the "thing," that is, the party, and the "name," that is, Communist, had become mutually incompatible. The survival of one entailed the destruction of the other.

The relatively rapid decline of Western communism, which has made appeals to its ideology evermore inexpedient, antedates the transformations of the East and even Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power. Each of the major European Communist Parties—the French, the Spanish, and the Italian—faced severe difficulty quickly following their brief moments of glory in the 1970s. The Partito Comunista Italiano still possesses enough electoral strength to hold one of every four seats in Parliament and to control major regional and city governments. But this pales before the PCI's ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

traordinary triumph in the 1976 parliamentary elections, in which the Party won more than thirty-four percent of the vote. Its electoral strength, coupled with the disarray that reigned among the country's dominant Christian Democrats, had seemed to herald a new era in Italian politics. But although the PCI gained important posts, within a few years it found itself once again on the margins of national power.

As in France and Spain, the Italian Communist crisis coincided with the reinvigoration of a socialist party. By the close of the seventies the rising star of Italian socialism, Bettino Craxi, had set out to redress the balance of power on the left and to assert his own pivotal role in national politics. Craxi arrived at the right moment. As Marxist ideologies collapsed, Communist principles increasingly came to seem at best passé, and at worst outright dangerous. From Mao's death to the Cambodian disaster, as well as from experiences closer at hand (including the PCI's own behavior in national politics), a terminal case of skepticism developed among many former believers.

Craxi's modernizing pragmatism and his attack on the PCI's complicit silences regarding the totalitarianism inscribed in its own traditions found sympathetic listeners both among the erstwhile new left and the political establishment. The former could never quite forget the PCI's hostility to their movements, and the latter could not bring themselves either to trust the PCI's professions of democratic faith or to share their spoils with yet another partner.

But Craxi's problem has proved more complex than that facing his French counterparts. Unlike the Parti Communiste Français, which has preferred to shrivel into ideological purity rather than to expand its cultural and political horizons, the PCI has attempted periodic updates of its platform and organization. Deft moves have led it to attenuate declarations of Marxist allegiance in Party documents and to eulogize feminism as a force of political transformation. Intelligent strategies of cooptation have brought eminent intellectuals, leading feminists, and progressive Catholics into the Party's orbit. With the establishment last year of a "shadow Cabinet," modeled on the British example, the PCI deliberately drew an analogy between itself and the Labour Party. Petitioning for membership in the Socialist International—heretofore Craxi's proud domain—the Communists have explicitly sought their place within the league of governing socialist and social democratic parties.

The general result of these and other incremental revisions has been a Communist cultural morass. To date the Party has not lost old believers while adding new beliefs. Seizing the opportunities swept into the Communist firmament by the new Eastern winds, Occhetto has now decided to cleanse the Party of what he evidently considers to be its traditionalist debris.

So in Bologna, in an immense hall bathed in red, to the notes of the Internationale and Bandiera Rossa, more than 1,000 delegates battled each other over radically divergent platforms. Occhetto led the majority in declarations that some have defined as "post-Communist" and that most agree are not at all Communist. From the condemnation of the PCI's too partial critique of the "realized socialism" of the East to the abolition of democratic centralism (that peculiar form of government whereby the rights of dissent are quashed in the name of democracy), Occhetto called for the reform of the Party and its traditions. He was not seeking simply to modernize the current organization. Rather, he launched a "constituent" phase destined to issue in a "new political formation."

As always in the arcana of political discourse, whom you cite is where you stand. And it is from Occhetto's references and silences that his direction can be gleaned: sprinkled references to Marx and Gramsci hardly masked a parsimonious mention of the patriarchs of the Communist pantheon. Citing Karl Polanyi, Max Weber, Paul Kennedy, and Alfred Lord Tennyson, Occhetto called for a "world government" founded on the obsolescence of the "very concept of the enemy." Specifically, he proposed a politics of socialist alliance firmly grounded in the Italian party system. Like the move of a poker player calling his opponents' bluff, Occhetto's "post-communism" precludes further recourse to long-standing objections (such as a lack of democratic credibility) to the PCI's entry into government. And espousing "institutional" reforms in Italy's parliamentary system that Craxi has long sought to promote, Occhetto established the grounds for agreement with the Socialists. With Occhetto's support for these changes, Craxi may now hope to realize the presidential republic he aspires to lead. Indeed, Craxi has already threatened the Christian Democrats with the (distant) prospect of a left-wing governmental coalition.

But neither the precipitate fall of the communism of the East nor the long erosion of the communism of the West have convinced all true believers to abandon their faith. And so the congress of Bologna was rent by the internecine conflict of three feuding factions. Against the reformist view Occhetto expounded, a few hard-liners reaffirmed their allegiance to a Soviet credo even the Soviets have discarded. Approximately thirty percent of congressional delegates followed old Party leaders into Occhetto's main opposition, heeding their calls for the end of the capitalist system and the preservation of the Party's name, identity, and tradition.

The confrontation assumed dramatic proportions. The dissenters refused to applaud the secretary's introduction. The first speaker for the main opposition collapsed after illustrating his faction's platform. Its ascetic and visionary leader, Pietro Ingrao, drew a standing ovation. At the end, a victorious but exhausted Occhetto sobbed in front of the delegates and television cameras.

It is not yet clear what will emerge from the "constituent" process that has now been inaugurated in the PCI and what kind of policy it will promote. Giacomo Marramao, a philosopher close to Occhetto, recounts a conversation with the secretary in which they took the American Democratic Party as their model. "We need,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marramao says, "a 'light' party," a party, one is to understand, in which a multiplicity of perspectives and interests can find expression. It is clear that for Marramao the Communist apparatus, with its suffocating vocation for both extracting and expressing consent, is beyond salvation.

Yet however warmly Occhetto may have responded to this suggestion, he has wound up at least verbally mediating with the opposition. As Maria Luisa Boccia, an emerging speaker for the opposition, explains, the option her group abhors is precisely that of the "American," or "light" party. "Granted that there will be a change, for that is now clearly unavoidable," Boccia says, she and her companions will strive for the constitution of a "seriously reformist party with a communist component." She intends to prevent the PCI's transformation into an "electoral" party, in which the leadership interprets the consent of voters it only episodically encounters. In Occhetto's congressional speech he stressed the importance of the "mass" nature of party organization, in an obvious effort to reassure Ingrao, Boccia, and their comrades.

Stefano Rodotà, the shadow minister of justice now in his eleventh year as an Independent Left parliamentarian, points to the contradictions that undermine Occhetto's position. "You cannot have both a 'mass' party and a 'light' party," Rodotà says. Similarly, "the PCI must decide which kind of institutional system it will work for. Should Italy follow the example of the French Fifth Republic, electing a parliament with limited functions, or should it model itself on the American presidential republic, in which the Congress wields important powers?" The issue remains unresolved. But the PCI's willingness to support processes of institutional revision in itself marks a major transformation.

Of course, the choice of a new institutional system, like the choice of a new form of party organization, represents precisely the abandonment of long-held positions many militants find unacceptable. With local elections coming up in May, both sides need to work together so that each can avoid taking the blame for an eventual electoral failure. In the longer term, the current tensions bode ill for those hoping for a peaceful coexistence. Should party unity crumble, Italy might once again have a Communist Party. It would be a party of less than ten percent of the electorate. Alongside it there might then exist a new social democratic formation with a penchant for citing liberal philosophers. One cannot tell whether this new formation would be absorbed by Craxi's Socialists or maintain its independence. But if a new, credibly democratic, and reformist political party were to appear on the scene, the old equilibriums might have to change. One could then envisage alternative solutions to governments anchored to the Christian Democracy. The Italian party system, which has produced innumerable governments with few variations of their members, might come "unblocked."

In this perspective the new "thing" Occhetto wishes to engender could not be called, as some hard-liners have suggested, the "Democratic Communist Party." It would have to adopt an altogether new name for an altogether new organization. The way systems die reveals much about how they lived. The Partito Comunista Italiano dies attempting innovation: it may be sheer opportunism, or it may be the result of conviction.

YASMINE ERGAS is a sociologist with the Social Science Research Council in New York.

The cocaine blizzard.

SNOWED IN

By Mark A. R. Kleiman

President George Bush, congressional Democrats, most big-city police chiefs, and the vast majority of Americans agree that it is both vital and feasible to stop the flow of cocaine from South America into the United States. Unfortunately, they're wrong. Nothing that happens in South America has any real chance of significantly reducing the cocaine problem in North America.

The mid-February "drug summit" in Cartagena was only the most recent media event promoting the fantasy theme of solving our drug problem offshore. Since the president's Oval Office address of last September applauding increased anti-cocaine efforts by the Colombian government, there has been a series of what the drug czar's latest strategy document calls "successes." The Colombian government "declared war" on the Medellín cartel. Several major South American dealers were indicted or extradited, and one was killed in a shoot-out with police. The Defense Department announced a billion dollar effort against drug smuggling. Manuel Noriega, reclassified from CIA asset to national menace when his drug-dealing activities came to light, moved his headquarters from the presidential palace in Panama City to the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Miami.

None of this, alas, had any perceptible effect on the U.S. cocaine market. A kilogram in Miami still costs about what it did a year ago (roughly $16,000), and retail crack markets continue to spread to new neighborhoods and new cities.

Some legislators have responded to this disappointing news by berating the administration for not doing enough to stop the drug flow, or doing the wrong things. But that criticism is misplaced; stopping the drug flow is like stopping the tide. Neither of the two goals of the "international supply reduction" strategy—creating a physical shortage of cocaine or increas-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing its import price enough to force consumption down—is achievable.

Consider the prospects for creating a long-term physical shortage, by eradicating and seizing so much cocaine that U.S. demand can't be satisfied. Cocaine isn't scarce and can't be made scarce. The State Department puts total production last year at 775 tons, more than triple current U.S. consumption. If increased seizures or increased demand threatened a shortage, farmers and refiners could always grow and process more cocaine.

The attempt to create a short-term shortage is frustrated by the fact that everyone in the cocaine business holds large inventories. In one recent six-week period, U.S. domestic law enforcement agencies seized more than forty tons of cocaine, about a two-month supply for the entire country. The vast bulk of that was concentrated in four large caches. Yet there was no shortage of cocaine. There must be even larger inventories in South America; the stuff is cheap to make, and no trafficker wants to be out of stock when a customer calls.

Thus we can't create a shortage because Adam Smith is more powerful than William Bennett. That leaves us with the goal of increasing prices. If more enforcement could impose very heavy costs on drug dealers, prices might rise enough to reduce abuse substantially—for drug consumption, like consumption of anything else, does respond to price. Even if some existing users will pay almost anything (most of them will not), new users certainly won't. Unfortunately, there's no reason to believe that anything done offshore could have much impact on domestic retail prices.

Refined cocaine is only a raw material in the cocaine dealing business—and a cheap raw material at that. Of the five dollar retail price of a rock of crack cocaine, only about fifty cents goes to growers, processors, and importers. The rest—ninety percent of the total—is added after the drug reaches the United States. That $4.50 in wholesale and retail markups isn't much influenced by conditions in the Andes or by seizures on the high seas or at points of entry. Even a doubling of import prices wouldn't much change the drug scene as viewed from the streets of Los Angeles, New York, or Washington.

Nor do any of the four currently fashionable approaches to increasing the price of cocaine imports—eradication, substitution, pre-emptive buying, or interdiction—have any prospect of doubling import prices. Eradication is cheap ($21 million) but largely futile: existing growers can always grow more coca. That's just as true for techno-thriller approaches such as releasing coca-eating caterpillars as for the more old-fashioned chop-and-spray techniques. In addition, new growers can enter the market by opening new areas to cultivation; the Colombian lowlands and the Amazon basin of Brazil have already been added to the Andean highlands as coca-growing regions because of eradication attempts and increased demand. Farther afield, Indonesia's role as the major supplier of coca for licit pharmaceutical cocaine between World War I and World War II shows that the range of *Erythroxylon coca* is not limited to South America. As long as the customer base is there, the financial awards of growing coca will assure that there will always be a supply to meet the demand despite any costs imposed by eradication efforts.

Crop substitution—offering coca growers incentives and technical assistance to grow non-drug crops—is another popular idea. Anything we can do to improve the ability of South American peasant farmers to earn an honest living is to be applauded, but providing alternatives isn't the same as reducing the supply of cocaine for the export trade.

Even at current prices, coca yields more revenue per hectare than any licit crop. Some farmers, given the choice, will leave the coca trade, but their greedier neighbors won't. And unfortunately, many of the technologies taught by crop-substitution experts are useful when applied to illicit as well as licit species. For instance, attempts in Thailand throughout the seventies to introduce drip irrigation and terrace farming to help farmers substitute rice for poppy led to the development of drip-irrigated, terrace-farmed poppy fields. By the same token, better roads built to encourage orange-growing make it that much easier to get coca to the airport.

Buying the coca crop, a perennial favorite despite a disastrous experience with Burmese opium in the sixties, sounds plausible only until someone asks what is to keep the farmers from growing twice as much coca and selling us half. Whatever the price announced for the official buy, refiners only have to offer to pay a little more to ensure their sources of supply. As both the European Community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture can testify, agricultural price supports are a reliable way to generate bumper crops. Buying refined cocaine instead of raw leaf runs into the same problem: somebody can always make more.

The fourth major international supply control strategy, and the one on which we now spend nearly $3 billion per year, is interdiction: capturing bulk drug shipments on their way north. The effectiveness of seizures in increasing price depends on how expensive it is for cocaine importers to replace the drugs lost to enforcement. For high-seas and port-of-entry seizures, replacing their merchandise costs them only about $2,000 per kilo—that is what cocaine sells for leaving the dock in Colombia. To this one must add the costs to importers of using more expensive smuggling techniques to avoid seizures. But it's hard to see how the replacement costs and additional smuggling expense associated with even a doubling of current interdiction efforts could make more than a few hundred million dollars' worth of impact on the $20 billion to $30 billion U.S. cocaine trade. That ratio of additional cost to current price suggests a price change of five percent or less: twenty-five cents added to the price of that five dollar rock.

It may seem incredible that in the high-tech nineties we can't keep drugs out of the country. But tens of thousands of vessels and vehicles and millions of people and heaven knows how many containers of everything from cars to blue jeans cross the U.S. border every

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

month. It is obvious by now that we can't keep illegal aliens out, and an alien is substantially harder to hide than a kilogram of cocaine.

Since the value of a kilogram of cocaine goes from a couple of thousand dollars as it leaves Colombia to more than $10,000 as it reaches the United States, individuals and organizations will expend ingenuity, time, money, and risk to get the powder in, as long as there are customers with money and a distribution system to deliver the drugs to them. Like Star Wars, interdiction is an offense-defense game that the defense is guaranteed to lose.

In fact, interdiction actually makes the situation worse in South America by forcing U.S. importers to buy more cocaine from Colombian exporters—the Medellín and Cali cartels and their competitors—to replace seized drugs. Every time we seize a kilogram of cocaine, someone in Colombia sells another kilogram to the importers. From the viewpoint of the South American drug lords, a kilogram seized is about as good as a kilogram snorted or smoked. Last year seizures accounted for about a quarter of all the cocaine shipped north.

If source control and interdiction won't work, what will? Legalization, the latest fad? Only if you either (1) imagine that making a product much more safe and convenient to buy and cutting its price by ninety percent won't have a huge impact on its consumption, or (2) don't care how many heavy crack users there are. (See "Crackdown" by James Q. Wilson and John J. DiIulio Jr., TNR, July 10, 1989.) Biomedical research? Only if you think that the root of the national drug crisis is insufficient knowledge about neurotransmitter chemicals and receptor sites. Treatment and prevention? Maybe, if we knew more about how to do them.

The one area of anti-drug effort that now gets almost no federal money is the point of contact between the drug distribution system and the drug user: the dealer on the street. The size of the cocaine problem in a city or neighborhood depends not on the state of the world cocaine market, but on how many retail dealers choose to make that city or that neighborhood their marketplace and how blatantly they feel they can safely hawk their wares. That in turn depends partly on retail-level law enforcement (and hardly at all on foreign source control).

State and local governments have been pouring more and more resources—police, prosecutors, courts, and corrections—into enforcing the drug laws, mostly at the retail level. As a result, many local systems are choking on drug cases. Corrections capacity (cells and "alternatives" alike) is in particularly short supply; local systems are catching more drug dealers than they have room for. The federal government, which has provided lots of cheerleading but not much money, could usefully donate some of the billions it now spends failing to keep drugs out of the country to expanding local criminal-justice systems.

But all of the political pressures push the other way. The ACLU doesn't like street-level enforcement because it means building more prisons. Police and prosecutors don't like it because chasing Mr. Big is more glamorous, less grubby, and safer. Republicans don't like it because it costs money and doesn't go bang. The president doesn't like it because it means spending federal revenues on state and local programs. Voters don't like it because it means putting a prison or halfway house in somebody's neighborhood. Against all of these disadvantages, increasing our capacity to punish retail drug dealers has a single advantage: some hope of actually reducing the impact of drug dealing on our lives.

MARK A. R. KLEIMAN, a lecturer in public policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, served in the U.S. Department of Justice from 1979 to 1983.

Canada's constitutional crisis.

TONGUE TIED

By Andy Stark

In Canada whenever politicians want to avoid talking about the substance of an issue, they generally adopt one of two postures: call them the "sincere" and the "courageous." John Turner, until recently the leader of the Liberal Opposition, leans toward sincerity: his election speeches attacking the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement were thick with emotion-charged avowals like, "I have never cared more passionately about an issue" and "this is the fight of my life." Thus, in reviewing one Turner performance, a Toronto columnist declared that although Turner was "wrong on many counts," he nevertheless spoke with "sincere conviction"; a recent headline in the *Ottawa Citizen* announced, "TURNER GOES ON THE ATTACK, BUT SINCERELY." Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, by contrast, often opts for the courageous approach: in defending his government's new scheme for a national sales tax, Mulroney habitually dwells on the proposal's unpopularity before concluding with something like, "We haven't decided to take this initiative because it's popular; we're doing it because it's right." The sincere politician makes his case by telling you how much he believes in what he's saying, the courageous politician by telling you how few believe in what he's saying. Both approaches disguise the real issues at stake.

Such has been the case in the current Canadian "constitutional crisis." On June 23, 1987, Mulroney and the premiers of Canada's ten provinces agreed on an important package of constitutional amendments. To be ratified, the "Meech Lake Accord," as it is called, requires the approval of the national Parliament and each

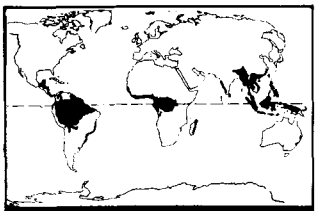
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AND ON THE EIGHTH DAY, WE BULLDOZED IT.

The oldest rainforests date back to the dinosaurs, 100 million years. Today they offer the last refuge for half of all plant and animal species on earth.

But how much time do rainforests have left? Millions of acres have been bulldozed and burned. Unless we act now, the last traces of original, irreplaceable paradise will vanish in a single human lifespan.

A miracle of creation will be wiped out, thousands of species doomed to extinction. And nobody will gain.



50,000 acres a day are lost worldwide.

Rainforest soils are too shallow for agriculture, their complex ecology too fragile for humans to exploit without turning our planet's richest natural regions into eroded wastelands. Short of sustainable uses, leaving the rainforests alone would be the most promising development.

What can you do to save the rainforests?

You can support activist organizations in a dozen nations compaigning to conserve the splendid variety of living things which depend on these endangered environments.

Elusive jaguars, rarest orchids, colorful birds of paradise. And the latest arrivals on the scene: the children of humankind.

Save the rainforests and safeguard the survival of half of the species on earth, including our own.
Here's my donation of ☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $75
☐ $100 ☐ _____

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP_____

RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK TNR-4

300 BROADWAY, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133

Public Media Center

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

provincial legislature by June 23, 1990. Although initially uncontroversial, the accord has over time deeply polarized the country. Most residents of Quebec—Canada's second-largest province and the only one with a French-speaking ("Francophone") majority—say that Quebec will likely secede from the country if the accord fails to become law. Most Canadians outside of Quebec have come to believe that the country will be preserved as a strong federal state only if the accord is defeated. This split now poses a potentially far graver threat to national survival than did the Quebec "separatist crisis" ten years ago.

The accord's primary aim is to correct a major flaw in the current constitution: eight years ago Mulroney's predecessor, Pierre Trudeau, promulgated a series of amendments over the objections of Quebec's separatist government. Quebec has thus never ratified the 1982 Canadian Constitution. In 1984 Mulroney came to power pledged to find a way for Quebec to willingly embrace "the Canadian family," and in 1986 a new, nonsecessionist Quebec government set out the terms under which it was prepared to do so. The Meech Lake Accord, which embodies those terms, gives to the legislature and government of Quebec the special role of "preserving" and "promoting" its own "distinct society"—a stipulation that is widely assumed to endow the province with special powers (the extent of which is open to debate) to advance the use of French in the province's social and economic life. And among other things, the accord provides each province greater control over the appointment of certain major federal officeholders, the alteration of the national parliament, and the design of some nationwide social programs.

By the end of 1988 eight of the ten provincial legislatures (including Quebec's) and the federal Parliament had ratified the accord. Surprisingly, though, the signatories made no concerted attempt to sell the agreement to Canadians at large. Because early polls showed that large numbers of Canadians professed both to favor the accord and to know next to nothing about it, the prime minister and the premiers thought it best to leave well enough alone. Whenever pressed, they sold the deal mainly by praising each other's "sincere motivation" and "honest devotion to country" in undertaking it. And because of this elite consensus, those few politicians who opposed the accord found their courage heralded while whatever substantive criticism they offered went largely unheeded. The one early parliamentary opponent of the accord was occasionally rewarded with headlines like "DONALD JOHNSTON'S LONELY COURAGE" and "DONALD JOHNSTON: A LESSON IN COURAGE"; meanwhile, as a *Montreal Gazette* columnist pointed out, Johnston's arguments themselves "languish[ed] unheard." Sincere men and courageous men thus once again stood toe to toe in an important Canadian debate, while the merits on either side sank like a stone in the public mind.

The one exception to this early void of public intellection among politicians was Pierre Trudeau, who issued a series of blistering attacks on the accord shortly after it was concluded. In particular, Trudeau characterized the distinct society clause not as a quid pro quo in which Quebec and the rest of Canada agreed on a principle of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," but as a give-away in which Quebec said to Canada, "You scratch my back and I'll scratch your face"—to which Canada only too willingly agreed.

To understand Trudeau's grievance—and the Canada he tried to create as prime minister from 1968 to 1984—one must understand his unique philosophy of language. "Man is bound," Trudeau used to be fond of saying (quoting Ernest Renan), "neither to his language nor to his race; he is bound only to himself because he is a free agent." For Trudeau, all varieties of language—like those of race, religion, nationality, and sex—should be seen as just so many characteristics that the individual, free agent that he is, can unconstrainedly mix, match, revise, and discard in order to create and continually re-create a self. According to Trudeau's brand of cosmopolitan liberalism, pluralism should be a feature not so much of societies as of individuals.

And especially *linguistic* pluralism, or "bilingualism," as it is generally termed. In a famous and revealing 1962 essay, Trudeau warned unilingual Quebec Francophone "intellectuals" that if they "refuse to master another tongue than their own, then they may be renouncing forever their place among the world's intellectual elite." For Trudeau, individuals can be expected to express themselves in languages other than their mother tongue without compromising their cultural identity. And also without straining their mental faculties: Trudeau equally scolded unilingual English-Canadian businessmen, refusing to accept it "when these insular people insist, with much gravity, that their jaws and ears aren't made for [French] and can't adapt themselves to [it]." For Trudeau, one's languages can be expanded just as can, say, one's political views. Attaining a new language is more a question of enlightenment than cognition.

Hence, Trudeau cannot abide the distinct society clause. For him, it represents a repudiation of nationwide bilingualism, and a capitulation to the "sociological reality"—as he scornfully calls it—that most individuals and districts within the country are inveterately and preponderately either Anglophone or Francophone. And if Quebec is entitled to consider itself distinct by virtue of its unique language, Trudeau told a parliamentary committee, then all other provinces are equally distinguished by a variety of other characteristics—each province has its own distinct national, religious, racial, and sexual makeup; its own distinct history and geography.

The Meech Lake Accord, by contrast, regards language as a human characteristic unlike any other—unlike race and sex in one crucial respect and unlike nationality and religion in another. Language—unlike religion and nationality, if more like race and sex—is rooted, inherent: while the inhibitions to altering reli-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gion and nationality are psychologically or socially imposed, the barriers to altering one's language, race, and sex are more deeply ingrained; they are cognitive or physiological. And the accord acknowledges this rootedness of individuals' mother tongues. Its governing principles recognize that if the two languages are to be preserved in Canada, it will not ultimately be through universal bilingualism—however worthwhile a goal that continues to be (and Mulroney has significantly strengthened Trudeau's bilingualism legislation)—but rather through the perpetuation of individual Francophones and individual Anglophones.

The accord also acknowledges that language—rather like religion and nationality, and unlike race and sex—needs community to survive. One can more readily remain black in a society of whites or female in a workplace of males than Francophone in a community of Anglophones. And the distinct society clause embodies an awareness of this communitarian nature of language: populations that are encouraged to be universally bilingual risk resorting over time and out of expediency to the exclusive use of the majority tongue. Maintaining distinct communities in which one or the other language preponderates, however, is to ensure that both survive. For the majority of Quebec's Francophones, language *is* different from other "human characteristics"; hence they reject Trudeau's view and decisively support the accord.

Outside of Quebec, though, Trudeau's critique of the accord has recently picked up some powerful support. New legislatures have come to office in the two provinces that hadn't as yet ratified the accord, as well as in one that had. Two of these are dominated by politicians heavily influenced by Trudeau's discontent, and both, as the central condition for its ratification by the June deadline, are demanding the evisceration of the distinct society clause. Although a process that could lead to a compromise on some of the accord's other provisions is under way, the elite consensus among prime minister and premiers on the distinct society clause has thus been broken. And polls now show that Canadians outside of Quebec—not having been exposed to any substantive campaign by the accord's political supporters—have replaced their disengaged acquiescence with active opposition. According to Toronto's Decima Research, sixty-three percent of Canadians outside of Quebec now oppose the accord. About the same number predict that Meech Lake will not be ratified.

Trudeau likes to say that although the Quebec government rejected his constitution in 1982, "Quebecers themselves remained Canadians; under the 1987 accord the Quebec government may finally sign, but the Quebec people [will then be pronounced] a distinct society, and the moral groundwork will be laid for the province's separation." For Mulroney, by contrast, the 1982 constitution, "though legally binding in Quebec despite its non-ratification, did not bind the hearts and minds of Quebecers to Canada." Consequently, their now entering the constitution with the accord would end Quebecers' "isolation and loneliness," while for them the distinct society clause is merely a protective legal device, not a spiritual manifesto. A recent, privately released poll shows that Mulroney is right. A majority of Francophone Quebecers believe that Meech Lake is a "centralizing," not a "decentralizing," document: despite the new powers the province gets with it, the accord above all represents to Quebecers the fabled instrument whereby Quebec would one day finally accept membership in a federal state.

Most Canadians, like Mulroney and Trudeau, do not want Quebec to separate. And the growing numbers of Canadians outside of Quebec who oppose the accord are convinced that if it fails, Quebec will still stay put. Yet sixty percent of Quebecers say the province will likely secede if Meech Lake fails to become law. The accord's opponents, for all their good intentions, profoundly misread the linguistic and political culture of contemporary Quebec. Canada is often described as a breathtakingly beautiful country physically, but as an entity that makes little sense intellectually. Given that broader context, those who believe that by opposing Meech Lake they are working to preserve the country may well be living in their own very special fool's paradise.

ANDY STARK, a policy adviser in the Office of the Prime Minister of Canada from 1985 to 1989, is a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution.

Settling for leverage.

BRICKS AND STONES

By Eugene V. Rostow

In the past several weeks the long-standing American objection to further Israeli settlements in the West Bank has been pressed by the Bush administration with new vehemence. The outcome of this argument is crucial. It will affect the substance, fairness, and durability of any peace that may emerge.

With varying degrees of seriousness, all American administrations since 1967 have objected to Israeli settlements in the West Bank on the ground that they would make it more difficult to persuade the Arabs to make peace. President Carter decreed that the settlements were "illegal" as well as tactically unwise. President Reagan said that the settlements were legal but that they did make negotiations less likely. The strength of the argument is hardly self-evident. Jordan occupied the West Bank for nineteen years, allowed no Jewish settlements, and showed no sign of wanting to make peace. Yet if the West Bank were 98 or 100 percent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arab when the parties finally reached the bargaining table, the impulse to accept a peace that ceded the whole of the West Bank to an Arab state would be tempting to Americans and Europeans, and even to some weary Israelis. The growing reality of Israeli settlements in the area, on the other hand, should be a catalyst for peace, by imposing a price on the Arabs for their refusal to negotiate. But the American government keeps reciting the old formula.

Secretary of State James Baker has gone beyond previous American positions by threatening to cut aid if the Israelis build more settlements in the West Bank. He spoke after Arab protests against the possibility of large numbers of Soviet Jews settling in Israel, particularly in the West Bank. Wouldn't it have been more useful if Baker had told his Arab interlocutors that if they want any parts of the West Bank to become Arab territory, they should persuade Jordan and the Arabs living in the occupied territories to make peace with Israel as rapidly as possible? Since 1949 the U.N. Security Council has repeatedly urged and occasionally commanded the Arab states to make peace, most recently in Resolutions 242 and 338. Thus far, with the exception of Egypt in 1977, they have simply refused to comply. But Baker yielded to the Arab outcry, and is trying to maneuver Israel into a position that no Israeli majority can accept: to renounce the right of settlement "of the Jewish people"—in the words of the Mandate—in any part of the West Bank.

The Jewish right of settlement in the West Bank is conferred by the same provisions of the Mandate under which Jews settled in Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem before the State of Israel was created. The Mandate for Palestine differs in one important respect from the other League of Nations mandates, which were trusts for the benefit of the indigenous population. The Palestine Mandate, recognizing "the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country," is dedicated to "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

The Mandate qualifies the Jewish right of settlement and political development in Palestine in only one respect. Article 25 gave Great Britain and the League Council discretion to "postpone" or "withhold" the Jewish people's right of settlement in the Transjordanian province of Palestine—now the Kingdom of Jordan—if they decided that local conditions made such action desirable. With the divided support of the council, the British took that step in 1922.

The Mandate does not, however, permit even a temporary suspension of the Jewish right of settlement in the parts of the Mandate *west* of the Jordan River. The Armistice Lines of 1949, which are part of the West Bank boundary, represent nothing but the position of the contending armies when the final cease-fire was achieved in the War of Independence. And the Armistice Agreements specifically provide, except in the case of Lebanon, that the demarcation lines can be changed by agreement when the parties move from armistice to peace. Resolution 242 is based on that provision of the Armistice Agreements and states certain criteria that would justify changes in the demarcation lines when the parties make peace.

Many believe that the Palestine Mandate was somehow terminated in 1947, when the British government resigned as the mandatory power. This is incorrect. A trust never terminates when a trustee dies, resigns, embezzles the trust property, or is dismissed. The authority responsible for the trust appoints a new trustee, or otherwise arranges for the fulfillment of its purpose. Thus in the case of the Mandate for German South West Africa, the International Court of Justice found the South African government to be derelict in its duties as the mandatory power, and it was deemed to have resigned. Decades of struggle and diplomacy then resulted in the creation of the new state of Namibia, which has just come into being. In Palestine the British Mandate ceased to be operative as to the territories of Israel and Jordan when those states were created and recognized by the international community. But its rules apply still to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which have not yet been allocated either to Israel or to Jordan or become an independent state. Jordan attempted to annex the West Bank in 1951, but that annexation was never generally recognized, even by the Arab states, and now Jordan has abandoned all its claims to the territory.

The State Department has never denied that under the Mandate "the Jewish people" have the right to settle in the area. Instead, it said that Jewish settlements in the West Bank violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which deals with the protection of civilians in wartime. Where the territory of one contracting party is occupied by another contracting party, the Convention prohibits many of the inhumane practices of the Nazis and the Soviets before and during the Second World War—the mass transfer of people into or out of occupied territories for purposes of extermination, slave labor, or colonization, for example.

Article 49 provides that the occupying power "shall not deport or transfer part of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." But the Jewish settlers in the West Bank are volunteers. They have not been "deported" or "transferred" by the government of Israel, and their movement involves none of the atrocious purposes or harmful effects on the existing population the Geneva Convention was designed to prevent. Furthermore, the Convention applies only to acts by one signatory "carried out on the territory of another." The West Bank is not the territory of a signatory power, but an unallocated part of the British Mandate. It is hard, therefore, to see how even the most literal-minded reading of the Convention could make it apply to Jewish

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Connecticut's 2nd District received $1.7 billion in defense contracts in FY 1

How did its Congressman vote on defense issues?*

settlement in terr
the Jordan Riv
construed to
occupation
pend, no
date. T
ment
inc

The coming cutbacks in defense should make for some interesting votes—and battles—in the House and Senate.

Look for fierce infighting over weapons contracts cancellations...intensified defense industry lobbying efforts...heated debates over troop withdrawals and base closings.

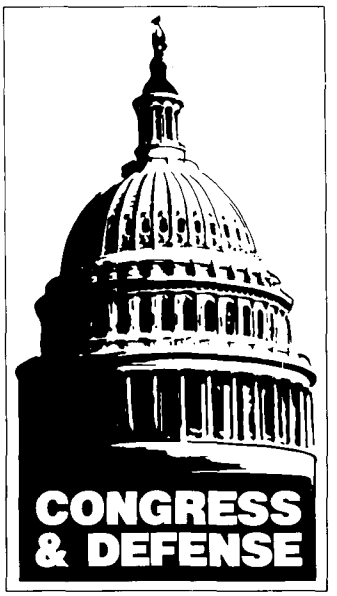
CONGRESS & DEFENSE 1990 cuts through the rhetoric and makes sense of the political and economic forces that shape relations between Congress and the defense establishment.

In its 200 pages of quick-reference tables and lists, CONGRESS & DEFENSE reveals the impact of defense spending and PAC contributions on individual Members and their states or districts.

If your business involves the politics of defense, CONGRESS & DEFENSE can save you countless hours of research and staff time.

Use the coupon below or call toll-free 1-800-424-2921 to order your copy today.

CONGRESS & DEFENSE is published by National Journal Inc., publisher of *The Almanac of American Politics.*



1990

For every state congressional district, CONGRESS & DEFENSE provides:

- Rankings of the largest defense contractors, major weapons systems, military installations and personnel
- Top defense-related PAC contributions
- Voting records on key defense issues
- Vote ratings based on how often Members voted in favor of higher defense spending
- Rankings of congressional districts, states and cities based on defense spending in those jurisdictions

Plus, an introductory essay by noted authority on Congress, Michael Barone, co-author of *The Almanac of American Politics.*

Whether you work in Congress, the media, the defense industry, or in policy research, you cannot afford to be without **CONGRESS & DEFENSE 1990**

*According to the C&D ratings system, 11% of his votes were cast in favor of higher defense spending.

Detach here and mail

☐ **Yes,** I need to understand the relationship between Congress and the defense establishment. Please rush me _____ copy(ies) of **CONGRESS & DEFENSE 1990** @ $85.00 (plus $3.50 per copy shipping).

☐ Send me both the print edition *and* the data files of CONGRESS & DEFENSE on floppy disk for $195. Specify ☐ 5-1/4" or ☐ 3-1/2"

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Business phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

PUBLISHER'S GUARANTEE: Examine CONGRESS & DEFENSE for 21 days. If not completely satisfied, return it for a complete refund.

MAIL TO: NATIONAL JOURNAL, Dept C&D, 1730 M St NW, Washington DC 20036. To order by phone, call 800-424-2921 (In D.C. 857-1491).

(Orders in D.C. add 6% sales tax.)

☐ Payment enclosed (*make checks payable to National Journal*)

☐ Charge to: ☐ Visa ☐ M/C ☐ A/E

Account # _____ Expire date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

04A

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

itories of the British Mandate west of
er. Even if the Convention could be
prevent settlements during the period of
, however, it could do no more than sus-
terminate, the rights conferred by the Man-
nose rights can be ended only by the establish-
and recognition of a new state or the
orporation of the territories into an old one.

As claimants to the territory, the Israelis have denied that they are required to comply with the Geneva Convention but announced that they will do so as a matter of grace. The Israeli courts apply the Convention routinely, sometimes deciding against the Israeli government. Assuming for the moment the general applicability of the Convention, it could well be considered a violation if the Israelis deported convicts to the area or encouraged the settlement of people who had no right to live there (Americans, for example). But how can the Convention be deemed to apply to Jews who have a right to settle in the territories under international law: a legal right assured by treaty and specifically protected by Article 80 of the U.N. Charter, which provides that nothing in the Charter shall be construed "to alter in any manner" rights conferred by existing "international instruments" like the Mandate? The Jewish right of settlement in the area is equivalent in every way to the right of the existing Palestinian population to live there.

Another principle of international law may affect the problem of the Jewish settlements. Under international law, an occupying power is supposed to apply the prevailing law of the occupied territory at the municipal level unless it interferes with the necessities of security or administration or is "repugnant to elementary conceptions of justice." From 1949 to 1967, when Jordan was the military occupant of the West Bank, it applied its own laws to prevent any Jews from living in the territory. To suggest that Israel as occupant is required to enforce such Jordanian laws—a necessary implication of applying the Convention—is simply absurd. When the Allies occupied Germany after the Second World War, the abrogation of the Nuremberg Laws was among their first acts.

The general expectation of international law is that military occupations last a short time, and are succeeded by a state of peace established by treaty or otherwise. In the case of the West Bank, the territory was occupied by Jordan between 1949 and 1967, and has been occupied by Israel since 1967. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 rule that the Arab states and Israel must make peace, and that when "a just and lasting peace" is reached in the Middle East, Israel should withdraw from some but not all of the territory it occupied in the course of the 1967 war. The Resolutions leave it to the parties to agree on the terms of peace.

The controversy about Jewish settlements in the West Bank is not, therefore, about legal rights but about the political will to override legal rights. Is the United States prepared to use all its influence in Israel to award the whole of the West Bank to Jordan or to a new Arab state, and force Israel back to its 1967 borders? Throughout Israel's occupation, the Arab countries, helped by the United States, have pushed to keep Jews out of the territories, so that at a convenient moment, or in a peace negotiation, the claim that the West Bank is "Arab" territory could be made more plausible. Some in Israel favor the settlements for the obverse reason: to reinforce Israel's claim for the fulfillment of the Mandate and of Resolution 242 in a peace treaty that would at least divide the territory. For the international community, the issue is much deeper and more difficult: whether the purposes of the Mandate can be considered satisfied if the Jews finally receive only the parts of Palestine behind the Armistice Lines—less than 17.5 percent of the land promised them after the First World War.

The extraordinary recent changes in the international environment have brought with them new diplomatic opportunities for the United States and its allies, not least in the Middle East. Soviet military aid apparently is no longer available to the Arabs for the purpose of making another war against Israel. The intifada has failed, and the Arabs' bargaining position is weakening. It now may be possible to take long steps toward peace. But to do so, the participants in the Middle East negotiations—the United States, Israel, Egypt, and the PLO—will have to look beyond the territories.

The goal of Yitzhak Shamir's election proposal is an interim regime of Arab autonomy in part of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in accordance with the Camp David Accords; the goal of the PLO is to establish a Palestinian Arab state in the whole of the territories. It is hard to be sanguine about the possibility of reconciling those positions through negotiations. Establishing a cooperative relationship between Israel and the Arabs who live in the occupied territories is a crucial part of the Palestine problem, but it is not the whole of it, and surely not an end in itself. The last thing Israel wants is an Arab Bantustan. If the status of the occupied territories is viewed in isolation, negotiation will be excruciatingly difficult, and every item on the agenda will be a tense and suspicious haggle on both sides.

The prospects for peace would be less forbidding if the question were approached as one element in a plan for achieving a larger goal: a confederation involving at least Israel, Jordan, and the occupied territories. Membership could perhaps be open to poor Lebanon as well, or parts of it. Even Syria, behind its ferocious words, may be preparing to move toward peace. Syria and Israel have congruent interest in Lebanon and elsewhere, and neither country wants a state dominated by the PLO as a neighbor.

The idea of a Palestinian confederation has been the recommendation of every serious study of the Palestine problem for more than fifty years. It was the essence of the partition proposals of the Peel Commission in 1936, and of the General Assembly's 1947 partition plan, at least for Israel and the West Bank. With different bound-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aries, it was also the basic idea of Israel's 1967 peace offer, which will always correspond to Israeli public opinion: Palestine divided into a Jewish and an Arab state, united in a common market, with special arrangements for Jerusalem and as much political cooperation as the traffic will bear. Before the intifada started, it was the notion behind the de facto Israeli-Jordanian condominium for the West Bank, which was both effective and practical.

After the past year's events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, who can say that progress in the Middle East is impossible?

EUGENE V. ROSTOW, undersecretary of state for political affairs from 1966 to 1969, is Distinguished Visiting Research Professor of Law and Diplomacy at the National Defense University.

Vying for the spoils of the Christmas uprising.

BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS

By Vladimir Tismaneanu

BUCHAREST

A new slogan is sweeping the University of Bucharest: "*Singura solutie/A doua revolutie.*" "The only solution/ The second revolution." Whether they know it or not, the students daubing and shouting this graffito cum chant are participating in a long historical tradition. Most major revolutions are followed—sooner or later, peaceably or violently—by a shakeout (sometimes also termed a "revolution") that gets rid of less revolutionary elements. Thus the American Revolution against British authority was followed by Jefferson's "revolution of 1800" against domestic Toryism. France's revolution against absolutism in 1789 was followed by the republican revolution of 1792. And Russia's liberal revolution of February 1917 was followed by the Bolsheviks' October Revolution.

Romania's Christmas revolution against Him and Her (as Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu used to be called by their terrified subjects) was joined by virtually all elements of Romanian society. That included many who had served the Ceausescus at some point (see "New Masks, Old Faces," TNR, February 5). Indeed, the top positions were quickly occupied by people who had held positions in the old regime, and I described the result as an attempt by Communists to hijack a popular revolution. Visiting Romania again, I can report that that is not the end of the story. Disaffected former members of the Ceausescu regime did not fully succeed in their hijacking. At the moment Romania is between revolutions. That is, the country appears to be sorting itself into two factions vying to inherit the spoils of the Christmas rebellion.

At the center of this conflict is the National Salvation Front (called the NSF, or simply the Front), the ruling junta since Christmas. Initially the NSF promised to be a non-political and non-ideological umbrella movement. But in February it adopted a neo-Bolshevik strategy, engineered by the veteran Communist Silviu Brucan. It transformed itself into a political party, ready to field candidates in the May 20 elections and to take advantage of its privileged position as the governing faction.

This action has incensed many who initially gave President Ion Iliescu the benefit of the doubt (he served as Party secretary for ideology under Ceausescu in 1970). Among those disappointed is Romania's most influential political columnist, Octavian Paler. Writing in *Romania Libera*, the country's most popular and outspoken daily, Paler has excoriated the NSF for failing to honor its earlier promise. During my conversations with him, he expressed concern that the Front is trying to institutionalize its power rather than acting as a transitional caretaker. The Front claims to be the embodiment of an "original" version of pluralism. But, as Paler argues, what Romanians yearn for is a banal democracy, with banal elections and a banal parliament. A quarter century of "exceptionalism" under Ceausescu has made them suspicious of any maverick solutions to the country's excruciating problems.

More ominously, there are indications that the Front has organized actions against its opponents. According to Sergiu Cunescu, acting chairman of the newly formed Social Democratic Party, the NSF has waged campaigns of disinformation to distort the goals of the democratic parties. Newspapers close to the NSF have accused the opposition of "trying to sell out the country" to the West. On January 29 and February 19, in response to pro-democracy demonstrations, the Front mobilized miners from the Jiu Valley to come to Bucharest to "defend the revolution." This populist dema-

VLADIMIR TISMANEANU, a resident scholar at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, is writing a book on the rise and fall of Romanian communism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gogy has contributed to a growing split between students and intellectuals on the one hand and segments of the working class on the other.

I heard similar concerns about the good faith of the NSF's leaders from Valentin Gabrielescu, spokesman for the Christian and Democratic National Peasant Party, and from representatives of the National Liberal Party. All the opposition parties told me that new demonstrations are to be expected soon. In spite of its name, the Provisional Coalition of National Unity, the country's mini-parliament, is far from reflecting a national consensus: the opposition perceives the Front as a neo-Communist formation—a charge that Iliescu and his associates strongly reject.

What I did not previously grasp is the tremendous rapidity with which a civil society has sprung up in Romania. Despite the Front's efforts to curtail the activities of new parties and independent associations, it is obvious that Romania enjoys both freedom of association and freedom of press. Indeed, as an exile returning to Bucharest after more than eight years, I found it almost surreal to be able to talk about anything one chooses, in the most uninhibited way. At several student gatherings I heard students publicly attacking some professors for their involvement in the propaganda pageants of the Ceausescu era. I heard intellectuals question the credibility of the current leaders without any fear of reprisals. The paralyzing sentiment that the government is omnipotent has vanished. The weekly *22* (the name evokes the date of the December 1989 revolution) publishes courageous editorials by its editor, Stelian Tanase, who has openly berated the NSF for its ambivalent approach to democracy. And in sometimes naive ways young Romanians express their enthusiasm for Western democracy and protest their leaders' paternalistic policies. People talk about the Stalinist crimes, the show trials of the 1950s, Romania's colonization by the Soviet Union, the humiliation of the national intelligentsia, and all the other topics considered taboo for more than four decades.

The whole country has become an immense agora. More than forty parties have already registered to run in the elections. More than 100 newspapers and journals have been launched in recent weeks, most of them with no support from the government. True, radio and television remain under state control and this affects the objectivity of the electronic media, as the prominent literary critic Nicolae Manolescu pointed out in *Romania Libera* after a major clash between demonstrators and government forces in Victory Square. Manolescu chastised Razvan Theodorescu, the respected art historian who serves as chairman of the State Committee for Radio and Television, for having permitted biased TV coverage of the spontaneous demonstration. The TV report focused exclusively on the violence and failed to note the reason for the demonstration: discontent with the government's procrastination in disbanding the Securitate apparatus. More than any other issue, the perpetuation of the Securitate, even under military control, makes Romanians nervous. How can people trust the new leaders as long as it is widely known that instead of being arrested, many secret police officers have been promoted?

Nevertheless, the legal space exists in Romania for anti-NSF social organizations to form, and people are taking advantage of it. The problem for the opposition is that the Ceausescu regime destroyed any sense of solidarity among people, and this is not easily recovered. As Mihai Sora, a distinguished philosopher who is minister of education, says, the Romanian political culture lacks a shared sense of the common good. Consequently, the opposition formations are mostly fragile attempts by small groups of individuals trying to give institutional expressions to their ideas. Predictably, these parties lack traditions, know-how, and infrastructure. And although everyone (including the NSF) professes to favor democracy and pluralism, none of the parties embodies a broad national sentiment of what those things should mean concretely.

When one talks to students and intellectuals, one gets the sense that Romania has been gearing up for something approaching civil war. Passions are inflamed, recriminations abound, people accuse each other of opportunism. The single word at the center of this civil war is "collaborationist." Students of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Bucharest managed to get rid of Radu Florian, a professor who for years indoctrinated them with Ceausescu's version of "scientific socialism." Ironically, the same professor was appointed by the NSF to organize a new Institute of Political Science, located in the building of the former Party academy. This resulted in the publication in *22* of an open letter to Florian signed by Dan Pavel, one of his former students, now an editor of the magazine, who urged the seasoned Leninist to put an end to his ideological exhibitionism. At least for the time being, Romanian students are viscerally allergic to any brand of Marxism, and those who continue to pontificate about socialist humanism are widely seen as either intellectual charlatans or incurable morons.

Every day the media publish pieces denouncing those who contributed to the perpetuation of tyranny. The chief architect of Ceausescu's cult, former Politburo member Dumitru Popescu, is now in jail awaiting trial. But most of the other sycophants are still free, and some of them have undertaken dizzying somersaults and posture now as born-again democrats. Eugen Florescu, one of Ceausescu's speechwriters and the former head of the Romanian Communist Party's press department, is now an editor of the new journal *Dreptatea sociala* (Social justice), where he claims to champion democratic values.

Make no mistake: the Ceausescus are gone, but far from forgotten. Rumors continue to spread about the vendettas supposedly being carried out by still-active loyalists. On March 1 the president of the military court that sentenced the Ceausescus to death, General Gica Popa, committed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suicide. The minister of justice has claimed that this was the result of a nervous breakdown. But that is not what most Romanians think. They talk about the unnerving phone calls and hate mail received by those directly involved in tearing down the Ceausescu regime.

At times, it seems, Romanians are obsessed with the Ceausescus. To take but one small instance, the print media in Romania run the Ceausescus' names uncapitalized, as if to deprive them by grammatical means of their humanity. And this was not a decision made by editors, who might be suspected of playing politico-linguistic games, but by the printers.

A more intellectualized picture of the intense hatred felt for the Ceausescus was revealed in a debate I participated in, sponsored by the Group for Social Dialogue, an independent community of intellectuals that enjoys enormous popular respect. (The Group occupies a superb building in the heart of Bucharest, formerly one of Nicu Ceausescu's residences and furnished to the crown prince's taste—i.e., bureaucratic kitsch. The rumor is that its basement was provided with two fully equipped torture chambers where Nicu—now arrested—could satisfy his sadistic propensities. It doesn't matter whether this is true: in Romania rumors are part of the objective reality.) During the debate the Group's Gabriel Liiceanu, an intense, skeptical philosopher, was challenged by the French writer André Glucksmann on the appropriateness of the term "genocide" to describe Ceausescu's crimes, abominable as they may have been.

But for Liiceanu, this challenge points to what Westerners missed in the Ceausescu story: that during his last ten years in office, he waged a total war against the Romanian people in pursuit of his insane projects. How else can one explain the ruthless austerity measures, the man-made famine, and the systematic decline in living standards? The dictator's intention—to create the "new man" by all means and against all odds—amounted to the physical extermination of all those who might have hindered the implementation of his lunatic plans. According to Dan Petrescu, a dissident writer who is now deputy minister of culture, Ceausescu had prepared a list of several thousand people—intellectuals, priests, rebellious workers, ethnic rights activists—who were to have been murdered the first moment of a popular revolt. It was only the extraordinary rapidity of the regime's disintegration and the disarray of the repressive forces following Ceausescu's escape from Bucharest that kept this scenario from coming true. The dictator's plan was to punish the whole Romanian people for having sabotaged his strategy for mandatory national grandeur.

Clearly Romanians cannot join together quite as Poles have, in a working coalition between former oppressors and the formerly oppressed. And this is why, in Romania, links to the former regime and its Communist ideology may well be the central issues of both the forthcoming elections and the political struggle that follows. Those links are extensive, and Romanians take them seriously.

Understandably, those in power who did work for Ceausescu at some time want Romanians to forgive and to look ahead. Iliescu told me that he had done much to hold the country together during the difficult days following the revolution. And that is true to an extent. Under pressure from below, he ousted the unpopular defense minister, Nicolae Militaru, and ordered the arrest of numerous officers of the former secret police. Following disturbances last January, when the government appeared to be under siege from students, Iliescu brought in representatives of the newly formed parties and put together a Provisional Coalition of National Unity, with himself (as NSF chairman) at its head.

But forgiveness has its limits, and Iliescu's continued identification with hard-liners is subverting his role as a figure of national unity. He has allowed the NSF to become a shelter for many who fear that the collapse of the old regime will mean the end of their public lives. He has not disavowed the nauseating professions of support for the NSF, and for himself, from individuals with impeccable pro-Ceausescu credentials. And some members of his entourage are neo-Marxist ideologues who are deeply convinced that the free market is inimical to social justice and who have gone out of their way to stimulate fears of privatization.

This is why Romania's path leads to a second revolution. At best, it will be an electoral revolution, like America's "revolution of 1800." If the May 20 elections sweep away all or most of the half-hearted democrats now in power and produce a consensus for the future, then they may, Iliescu hopes, give birth to a constituent assembly that will lay the foundation stone for new state institutions. But if the elections produce no consensus, leave the neo-Leninists with substantial power, and settle nothing about a future course, then Romania's second revolution will take place in the street, which could mean a war of all against all.

If Iliescu wishes to prevent this, he will have to do two things quickly. First, he must undertake a thorough examination of the country's forty-plus years under communism, so that Romanians can put that era behind them. As long as people feel threatened by the shadowy members of the Securitate, as long as the trials of the former officials appear to cover rather than reveal the Communist crimes, there is little prospect for social peace. To this end, information must be made available about the inner structure of the NSF leadership: Who are these fellows, where do they come from, what are their credentials, had they known each other before the revolution? Second, Iliescu must put a stop to the incessant harassment of the opposition parties—which includes illegal searches of their headquarters and psychological and physical intimidation of their members, as well as restrictions on their rights to establish independent radio and television stations. Nothing less will convince people that the NSF-led government intends to act as a fair-minded caretaker during the coming elections. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Sense and Sensuality

Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982) was an elegantly malevolent delight, so I was sorry to miss his two subsequent features, which were shown here only at festivals. Now comes **The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover** (Miramax), and as the English say, I'm struck all of a heap. What is *this*? It has the same Greenaway voluptuous color, the same intricate compositions, the same ruthless sexuality, but this time they are all used in a charade that hovers between the pointless and the obvious.

The chief setting is a fantastically luxe modern restaurant, with a full-scale reproduction of a Frans Hals across the back wall—*The Banquet of the Officers of the St. George Militia of Haarlem*, one of the so-called Doelenstukken with which Hals and his fellow painters celebrated the Civic Guards of their day. The restaurant setting and the painting warn us that we are about to witness continuity and contrast: we are going to see some feasting, but the spirit of it will probably be quite different from Hals. In fact we've already been alerted: the very first shot is of large dogs—in portentous light and slow motion—tearing at meat outside the restaurant.

The principals in the story, such as it is, are a brute gangland chief, Michael Gambon, and his aloof wife, Helen Mirren, who dine in the restaurant every night surrounded by henchmen; and a scholarly looking gent, Alan Howard, who dines alone while reading books. The cook and owner, Richard Bohringer, is involved, but it's an auxiliary role. One evening, Mirren and Howard, who don't know each other, exchange glances. Then, while Gambon keeps feasting noisily with his pals, Mirren slips off to the immense and otherwise empty ladies' room to meet Howard. They go into a stall and execute amorous maneuvers with acrobatic finesse.

On succeeding evenings the lovers meet again in the ladies' room (never used by any other woman), then in a kitchen nook provided by Bohringer, where, as they flail away, they are surrounded by heaps of foodstuffs. All this while Gambon is carousing with his pals inside, too busy to notice his wife's prolonged absence. The gorging of food, the ravenings of sex, the ladies' room, the ornate restaurant—we're not given much chance to miss the symbols (as against the delicacy of *The Draughtsman's Contract*). Eventually Gambon suspects his wife, and the film winds to a violent yet picturesque end in the bookshop that Howard owns. (He specializes in books on the French Revolution, as if we needed yet another symbol.)

"Picturesque" is the obligatory term. Greenaway's earlier film might have degenerated into the merely picturesque if he hadn't been burrowing into us with a bitter, cogent story. Here there is only a heavy yet superficial allegory about different kinds of sensuality, so the pictures merely hang there before us, one after another. Almost all of them are gorgeous. As the camera recurrently travels slowly from left to right or in reverse, through the cavernous kitchen to the grand dining room and back, it isolates beautiful panels: a scullery boy singing in a silvery soprano as people bustle behind him: chefs working like skillful mimes in a scenario of food preparation; attendants and passing personages—all bathed in the luscious light of Sacha Vierny's camera. (He did many of Resnais's films and *Belle de Jour* for Buñuel.) Virtually every frame could be reproduced in a film journal and would look enticingly magnificent; but the magnificence gets more and more hollow as the film progresses.

The actors seem deluded. Why did they want these roles? Bohringer is an established figure in France, yet here he plays only a glorified stooge. Howard and Mirren (she was last seen here in *Pascali's Island*) are actors of high repute; why did they accept roles with frontal nudity and much simulated sex? The question is not censorious. A good actor does whatever a good part requires, but these are vacuous parts. Gambon is surely one of the best actors now at work in Britain (he's best known here as the Singing Detective on PBS); but his role here has absolutely no growth or reward. His character merely repeats his coarseness and bullying over and over and over.

Monsieur Hire (Orion Classics) is a slick remake of a Simenon novel that was first filmed by Julien Duvivier in 1946 under the title *Panique*. Now it is somewhat differently adapted by Patrice Leconte, who directed, and Patrick Dewolf. For Duvivier the leading woman was a slut; not here. She is played by Sandrine Bonnaire, the superb actress of *Vagabond* and *Under the Sun of Satan*, and the title role is

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Cinema Paradiso. *In a Sicilian town, a film-going boy grows up. Rich and redolent. (Reviewed 2/19/90)* **Glory**. *Fine directing and writing, and (with the exception of Matthew Broderick) fine acting in this stirring account of a black Union Army regiment and its white colonel. (1/8&15/90)* **Lonely Woman Seeks Life Companion**. *The Soviets send us a not-quite-comedy, delicately done in every way, of a fortyish woman and her grasp at happiness. (3/19/90)* **Pretty Woman**. *Enjoyable hokum about a high-rolling investment broker and an LA hooker. The plot is there only to let us spend time with Richard Gere and Julia Roberts, who are worth it. (4/16/90)* **—SK**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

played by Michel Blanc, last seen here in *Menage*.

Altered the story may be—I don't know the novel—but the timbre is pure Simenon. Monsieur Hire is a quiet, reclusive man who lives alone in a large Paris apartment house and goes routinely to and from his tailoring shop, except for an occasional visit to a bowling alley or a brothel. Most of his time at home he stands at the window of his darkened little apartment, listening to Brahms, while he looks across the courtyard into the lighted apartment of a young woman who frequently receives her lover there. She finally discovers that she is being watched. (Denis Lenoir's camera makes Hire's head look, from the outside, as if it were hanging in midair.) Her discovery of the voyeur, instead of disturbing her, suggests an avenue to power over him, a power she uses to a surprising end.

Blanc, known particularly for comedy, gives Hire all the strange silence and submerged feeling that the role needs. Bonnaire, is, as ever, captivating, excellent. Leconte, also best known for comedy, puts before us plaque after plaque of mystery, almost like evidence of the unknowable. But the screenplay disserves the film. It's so crammed with the unbelievable and the too-neat that the march of minor tragedy stumbles into the factitious.

Hopeless (?) Note. Two years ago Nanni Moretti's *The Mass Is Ended* was seen here briefly. It was Moretti's fourth feature but his first to be released in this country, and it explained his high reputation in Europe as writer, director, and actor. (He plays his own leading roles.) The film dealt with the difficulties facing an earnest young priest in Italy today, and an Italian friend of mine called it the best treatment of post-1968 Italy that he had seen. A hostile New York press cut short the film's run.

Recently, in the New Directors/New Films series sponsored by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Museum of Modern Art, there was a chance to see Moretti's latest, **Palombella Rossa**. Literally this means red woodpigeon, and I don't understand its application. The film is about a water-polo match (a sport that Moretti used to play professionally), treated as a metaphor of crisis for the Moretti character—a Communist in intellectual difficulties today.

Moretti, who is now thirty-seven, uses the metaphor gracefully, wittily, in a style that owes something to Fellini but has its own touching gravity. This is not as wholly satisfying a film as *The Mass Is Ended*, but it proves again that Moretti is a refined, perceptive, endearing artist. And the two showings of *Palombella Rossa* in that recent series apparently consti-

NOW IN PAPERBACK

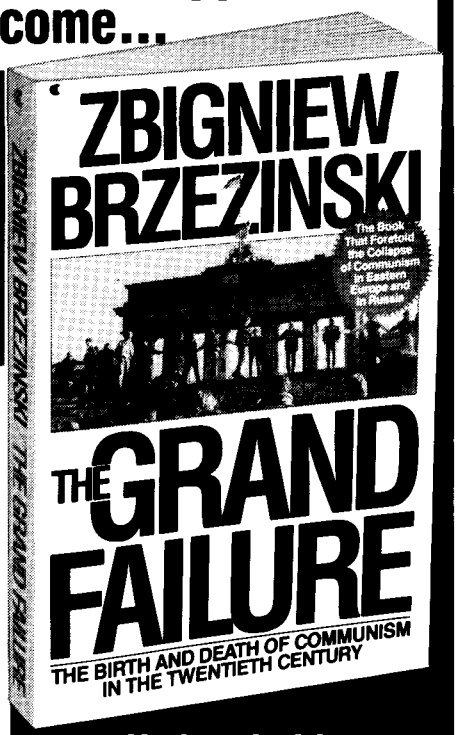
To understand what has happened and what is yet to come...

"Who better than Brzezinski with his rich ethnic, intellectual and governmental experience to assess it all?" —*Washington Post*

"Immensely illuminating." —*Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Succinct and remarkably thorough." —*Wall Street Journal*

"An important and very readable book." —*Los Angeles Times Book Review*


ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
The Book That Foretold the Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and in Russia
THE GRAND FAILURE
THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF COMMUNISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Updated with a new Introduction and Epilogue

At all bookstores or call 1-800-323-7445 to place your credit card order

COLLIER BOOKS
An imprint of Macmillan Publishing Company

Does the "replica" outperform the famous original?

Mount Fuji Ceramic Pen only $39.95*

But read this ad for an even better deal.

•*The great reservoir of the* Mount Fuji Ceramic Pen *holds enough ink to draw a line 6.3 miles long. That is enough to write a medium-size novel. But just in case your literary requirements go beyond that, we include an extra tip and an extra ink reservoir.*

One of the world's truly fine line of products is that of Europe's Montblanc pens, appropriately named after that continent's highest mountain. If you have ever written with a Montblanc pen, you know that writing with them is a delight and almost effortless. One substantial drawback, however, as with so many luxuries, is that their price is awfully high. It is easy to spend $150 or more for one of them. Our Japanese friends have created a "replica" of this outstanding pen, which (except for one small detail—it doesn't have that 6-pointed star on the top) is indistinguishable in appearance, heft and feel. Not surprisingly, they called it *Mount Fuji*. It has the same hi-lacquer finish, with goldtone accents, as the famous original. The ceramic writing tip provides silk-smooth, effortless writing. It will never flatten or skip, even after hardest and longest use.

The most remarkable thing about the *Mount Fuji Ceramic Pen* is its price. We are the exclusive direct mail distributors of this splendid writing instrument and can offer it therefore for just $39.95. But, we have an even better deal: ***Buy two for $79.90, and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** Discard those tacky ballpoint pens and those clumsy felt tips. Write smoothly and easily, give character and good appearance to your writing. And make a really great buy. Treat yourself to better writing and get your *Mount Fuji Ceramic Pen(s)* today!

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER
TOLL FREE (800) 882-3050
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Please give order **Code #4800A289** for *Mount Fuji Ceramic Pen*. If you prefer, mail check or card authorization and expiration. We need daytime phone for all orders and issuing bank for charge orders. UPS/insurance: $4.95 for one *Mount Fuji Ceramic Pen* and $6.95 for three. Add sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30 day return and one year warranty.

For quantity orders (100+), call Ernest Gerard, our Wholesale/Premium Manager at (415) 543-6570 or write him at the address below.

since 1967
haverhills®
131 Townsend Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tute its entire American career.

In Peter Bondanella's valuable *Italian Cinema* (1990), he writes of the 1980s:

> Only two figures—Nanni Moretti and Pupi Avati, both undeservedly little known outside of Italy—may be said to have earned the right to be considered as first-rank directors with a body of work that stands in comparison to that of their older and better-established colleagues.

I've never had a chance to see anything of Avati's. Of Moretti I've seen just enough to know what American filmgoers are missing. •

Herbert Muschamp on Architecture

When the Cathedral Turned Black

The CBS Building turns twenty-five this year. That's five years short of the thirty that must pass before a building can be designated a New York City landmark, but Black Rock is already a landmark in my book. Eero Saarinen's only skyscraper, CBS is the last great building built in New York. I know that's a sweeping statement. Let me sweep it by you one more time. *Not one great building has gone up in this city for twenty-five years.* Not since many of us who live and work here got to town. Not since nearly a third of the population was born.

Now for a little serious backpedaling. There's been a lot to compensate for the lack of first-rate architecture in New York since 1965: the growth of architectural preservation from scattershot protests to a major force in urban planning; the use of "contextual" design to heal the gashes inflicted on the urban fabric by Modern planning concepts; the substitution of neighborhood renovation for urban renewal; the empowerment of community boards to influence design decisions. Because of these developments in urbanism (even allowing for the real estate free-for-all of the Koch years), we can count the past quarter century as a period of progress toward discovering how democracies should build.

To unpack the significance of CBS, a building eloquently mute, aggressively withdrawn, is to go some distance toward understanding this development—why New York architecture has lapsed behind urbanism in the years since Black Rock arose. It is also to see why covering up the failures of Modern design cannot suffice to bring architecture up to date. For that, we also need to re-examine our disenchantment with Modernism's successes.

Like the black slab from outer space in *2001*, another sixties classic, Black Rock materialized from an alignment of forces; not Earth, Moon, Sun, and Jupiter, but New York, Modernism, industry, and media. It climaxed a decade's streak of brilliant buildings shaped by the first three of these forces, a run that included Lever House, the Seagram Building, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Pepsi-Cola Building. These buildings joined Modern promise to Manhattan confidence. They buttressed an arc of faith in the city's destiny to lead the postwar world toward the good modern life.

Though the vocabulary of most of these buildings derived from Europe, they spoke in New York accents. Weimar Germany may have been the laboratory for Modern architecture, but Manhattan had long been its spiritual home: in European eyes, an eruption of raw industrial energy calling out to be tamed by the enlightened modern hand. This was the city that in 1925 gave Fritz Lang his glimpse of *Metropolis*, that inspired Le Corbusier a decade later, in his book *When the Cathedrals Were White*, to extoll New York's skyscrapers as equivalent in aspiration to the spires of medieval Europe. "Compared with the Old World," Le Corbusier wrote, New York "has established, after twenty years, the Jacob's ladder of modern times." And it was here, after the war, that the United Nations set up the world's last, best hope, in the city's first major complex of Modern buildings, following Le Corbusier's plans.

The U.N. buildings gave the new style the prestige of a global authority. But to climb Jacob's ladder of Modernism, architects first had to scale the corporate ladder of industry. The 1932 "International Style" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art had been organized by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock expressly to persuade captains of industry to adopt the aesthetic. Later, the museum mounted its Good Design shows to change the look of industrial products. For that matter, the Museum of Modern Art was itself the creature of corporate culture; so was the U.N.'s physical plant. Both owed their existence to Rockefeller largess, their crisp Modern looks to the family's choice of architects.

It is often thought that the corporate hold on Modernism was an American, capitalist perversion of European socialist ideals. Yet it had long been the European view that industry would take the lead in ushering in a progressive social order. That is one reason why Modern forms were based on industrial models. Le Corbusier's 1922 "Citrohan" house, an early version of the "machine for living," was a conscious play on the name Citroen, a deliberate play for industrial patronage. Modernism had always been an architecture of the workplace. The great New York towers of the 1950s and 1960s were an homage to the capital of the culture of work.

At the time of its appearance, not every observer was willing to admit Black Rock to the roster of great Modern buildings. Much of the criticism focused on the building's unrelieved verticality. "I wanted a building that would stand firmly on the ground and would grow straight up," Saarinen said. He achieved this by placing structural columns on the outside of the building and running them the full height of its thirty-eight stories. Gone was the traditional, tripartite division of base, shaft, and top. Gone was the transfer of the building load to widely spaced, two- or three-story-high columns at the ground floor, typically used in other Modern buildings to make a transition from the scale of the street to that of the tower. Gone was the entrance canopy, or the low, horizontal slab used to balance (as at Lever House) the tower's vertical thrust. To many, the result was a building devoid of scale, an impression magnified nearly to the point of physical menace by the dark tinted windows, the surface of charcoal granite.

I never shared that impression. The notion that entrance canopies and wider column spacing introduce "human scale" has always struck me as truer in theory than in space. To my eye, these features exaggerate the scale of the tower by raising it above eye level. At CBS, by contrast, the tower reaches down as well as up. It lets you touch the very columns that scrape the sky. The effect is to magnify the scale of the body at the building's base. (Fashion photographers, who instantly adopted the building as a favorite location, recognized that it sets off the body beautifully.) Saarinen introduced human scale *horizontally* into this vertical composition. The width of the columns (each five feet, alternating with five foot openings for windows) is body-scaled: it was determined by the minimum-size opening for revolving doors. The sunken court, and the five easy steps one descends to reach it, also set the tower

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

firmly within physical reach.

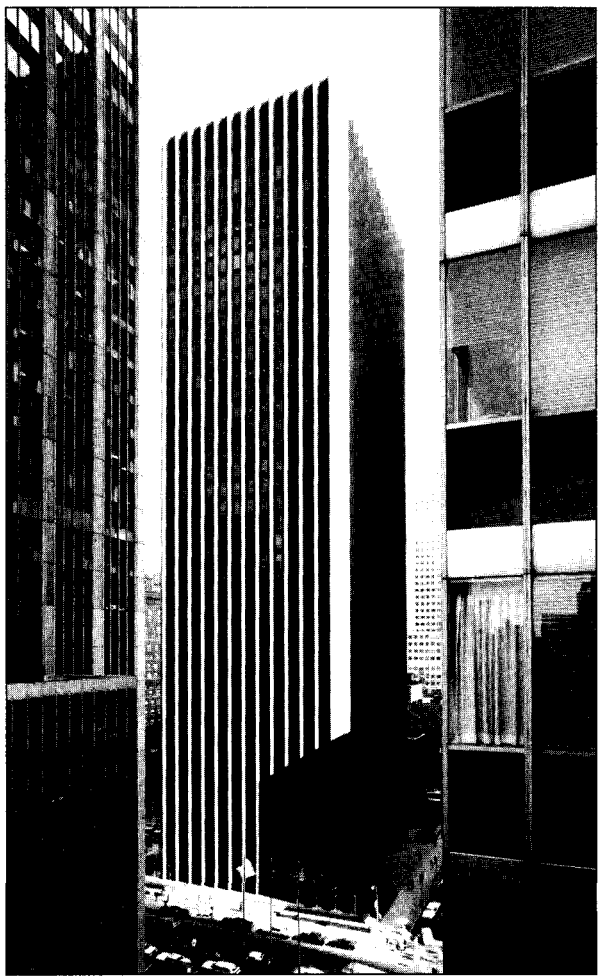
The most dramatic demonstration of the building's sensitivity to human scale is the extent to which the viewer controls the building's actual appearance. It's an effect that has delighted me for twenty-five years: the apparent opening and closing of the V-shaped columns as you walk past them, transforming the exterior (at the viewer's own pace) from a sheer cliff of solid granite to a lustrous setting—like jeweler's velvet—for the dark sparkle of reflections in the windows and of office lights glinting behind them.

But the main problem people had with CBS was not scale. They were reluctant to concede that Saarinen had designed a truly Modern building. Modern buildings, for instance, did not have load-bearing walls. They had glass curtain walls that allowed, in theory, the interpenetration of interior and exterior space. And Modern typefaces did not have serifs, like the distinctive graphics that Lou Dorfsman designed for use throughout the building and on CBS stationery. Sure, it was elegant, but it wasn't Helvetica. And some of those big, black, butch columns—weren't they (swift kick) *hollow* at the core?

More to the point, many critics were unwilling to admit that Saarinen was a genuinely Modern architect. To true believers in the canon, Saarinen was something of a traitor. Like his contemporary Johnson, Saarinen began his career with buildings that strictly toed the standard Miesian line. But in later work, such as the TWA terminal at JFK and the Ingalls Hockey Rink at Yale, Saarinen abandoned the canonical vocabulary and adopted instead a personal expressionism that treated each building as an opportunity to create a unique, distinctive form.

To his detractors, it was obvious that Saarinen had sold out, as though the packaging ethos of the Styling Center he designed for General Motors in 1956 had taken over his mind. "Through them runs the insistent American instinct for simplistic and, in this case, spectacular solutions," wrote Vincent Scully of Saarinen's late buildings; they "give the impression of having been designed in the form of models for dramatic unveiling at board meetings and of having never been detailed beyond that point." The TWA terminal was a particularly flagrant violation of the Modern rule that form should express structure. Designed to look as though its enormous cantilevered "wings" exploited the structural properties of concrete, concrete was in fact barely more than a veneer covering the vast amount of steel support required to hold the roof in place. Similarly, at the Yale rink a central concrete supporting arch, evidently held aloft by its own internal tension, in fact needed to be stabilized by cables anchored to the ground on either side of the building.

Saarinen *was* Modern if you were willing to extend the word to include the phase of Expressionism that immediately preceded the formation of the Bauhaus canon in the mid-1920s. But that is precisely what the keepers of the canon refused to do. Canonical Modernism, though framed by architects many of whom had themselves been Expressionists, was a reaction against Expressionism; and once they had embraced the ideal of building for a machine age, canonical Modernists did not even want to be reminded that Expressionism had ever happened. By the mid-1960s it had been a buried episode in Modern architecture for three decades, referred to as a curiosity—if at all. (Pevsner dismisses this "riotous style" in a paragraph of *Pioneers of Modern Design*.)



THE CBS BUILDING, COURTESY OF KEVIN ROCHE, JOHN DINKELOO, AND ASSOCIATES

Saarinen's architecture not only reverted to a condemned style, it also refuted the standard rationale for the condemnation: that Expressionism's poetic forms stood little chance of realization in the tough world of real building. As Scully acknowledged, "Saarinen's buildings are the most popular packages of their time and a revealing image of it." And yet, if you were willing to accept the bearing wall and the serifed letters (and Le Corbusier himself had employed both), the fact is that Saarinen produced for CBS a building that could pass the strongest Modern muster. Structurally as well as visually innovative, it was the first reinforced concrete office tower in New York. Modern, too, was the emphasis on standardization, or, as a glowing feature in *Life* magazine proclaimed, the building's "Total Design." The five-foot rhythm of column and window was extended throughout the building's interior. Laid out by CBS's president Frank Stanton, the offices offered configurations of a basic five-foot module, a tatami-mat proportion that recalled the early Modern fascination with the Japanese vernacular.

Even the building's striking visual impact was rooted in Modern ideology. The sheer rise from street to sky harked back to the ideas of an acknowledged Modern hero, Louis Sullivan, the Chicago-based "father of the skyscraper." CBS went beyond Sullivan's own pioneering towers toward fulfilling his prescription that the skyscraper "must be every inch a proud and soaring thing, rising in sheer exultation that from bottom to top it is a unit without a single dissenting line." And the system of structural columns provided an elegant solution to that obsessive Modern problem, "turning the corner." At the corners of CBS, the walls bring two columns into abutment without breaking the ten foot rhythm, forming a single column of double size, its axis rotated forty-five degrees to the plane of the wall. The turn is almost automatic.

Here, the simplistic package had been refined into a simple statement—simpler, even, than the Seagram Building, with its "facade" of non-structural T-beams, its bracing at the rear concealed behind a glass curtain wall. And the spectacular was transmuted into the spectacularly understated; a charcoal business suit beside which Lever House looked like a loud checked jacket.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Today is seems like hair-splitting to question whether CBS was or was not a Modern building. Not so in 1965, for a lot was invested in the importance of that distinction: the collective ego of a generation that had inherited the belief that it was the architect's destiny to remake the entire modern world. That belief depended on consensus: we could not have a generation of architects each remaking the world to a different design. That had been the Expressionist folly. To deviate from the canon was to undermine the consensus, hence to weaken the validity of the claim.

But the problem raised by CBS went deeper, precisely because the building was so respectably Modern. For what did it mean if an image-maker created a Modern building? It meant that the distinction between the package and the canon had worn thin. It meant that perhaps the canon was just another package. It meant that maybe architects had been fooling themselves in thinking that by adhering to the canon they, not the CEOs, were setting the terms of corporate culture. Perhaps corporate America had been calling the shots all along.

And indeed, by the time CBS opened, the influence of Modernism was already on the wane. Saarinen died in 1961 (leaving his associates John Dinkeloo and Kevin Roche to complete work on CBS and other projects). In 1962 the jackhammers began hacking away at Penn Station, rousing into being the preservation movement and its challenge to the Modern movement's contempt for the past. In 1963 the Pan Am Building, designed by a team of architects that included Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius, became the conspicuous focus of public anger over its destruction of the vista down Park Avenue.

These events were not in themselves sufficiently powerful to halt Modern architecture in its tracks—until the 1970s who but a few cranks like the classicist Henry Hope Reed had any conception of an alternative?—but they did contribute to a change in public perception. They weakened the contract that had equated Modernism with enlightened progress, and revealed instead an alliance with the darker, more destructive forces of modern life. By 1966 it was possible to interpret Marcel Breuer's fortresslike Whitney Museum as a reflection of growing defensiveness in the profession itself. "Beware of boiling oil!" cracked the entry on the Whitney in the *AIA Guide to New York City*. But such martial impressions were not a joke to those who felt oppressed by Modern architecture's aggression, or to Modernists who began to sense that the days of their movement, so newly victorious, might soon be numbered.

The pivotal New York building in this shift of opinion was the Ford Foundation Building, built in 1967 and designed by Saarinen's successors, Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo, and Associates. The building was a great critical success. Its indoor garden was an instant hit: a welcome note of bucolic delight after the somber urbanity of CBS. But some found the garden as troubling to contemplate as it was spectacular to behold. The garden was visually arresting, but it was programmatically as inhospitable as the stark granite walls the building turned to the street. The public could enter but not use this space; guards stood by to make sure no one loitered, sat down, pulled out a sandwich.

And at that moment the contradiction between image and program conformed too closely to the ruses of corporate culture of which Americans were becoming less tolerant. By 1967, of course, the 1960s had become The Sixties. "Total Design" had come to look suspiciously like totalitarian design. Who *were* these people to tell secretaries they couldn't keep family pictures on their desks? That the Ford Foundation was headed by McGeorge Bundy, an architect of the Vietnam War, only confirmed the feeling that this building typified the smugness of the military-industrial complex, serene in its garden, indifferent to the world. Scully gave voice to this response in 1969, when he wrote that all of this firm's buildings shared "a quality at once cruelly inhuman and trivial, as if they had been designed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff." For Scully, this "paramilitary dandyism [was] especially disturbing at the present moment in American history."

Ada Louise Huxtable, a passionate admirer of the Ford Foundation Building, tried to brush off this criticism. To attack the building on the basis of the foundation's politics was to commit what she termed the "socio-aesthetic fallacy." "Monumentally and urbanistically," Huxtable wrote, "the structure works well." But the problem was that, monumentally and urbanistically, the architecture confirmed what people detested about the politics. You could admire the architecture, the way you could admire the sleek design of a military helicopter. But to persist at this late date in the belief that Good Design redeemed all was to expose a problem far more serious than the restricted garden: the extent to which the aesthetics and the sociology of Modernism had diverged.

Socio-aesthetic fallacy indeed! As if social ideology were not a foundation on which the legitimacy of Modern forms was based. To dismiss this connection as a "fallacy" was to confess how weak the foundation had become. The true fallacy was a failure to recognize that without its supporting ideology the Modern aesthetic would soon collapse like a house of cards.

What was lost was more than a style. It was the consensus that had made it possible to believe that this style was leading us toward a better world. From this point, the social agenda of Modernism was embodied in resistance to Modernism, the ideals of its consensus in a resistance to consensus. Soon Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, published in 1966 by the Museum of Modern Art, would propagate a theoretical framework for dismantling Modern form, substituting the ideal of diversity for the unity of the International Style. Soon the Art and Architecture Building at Yale, Paul Rudolph's 1966 tribute to Corbusian principles, would be set ablaze by students who saw it as a symbol of the growing gap between Modern pieties and the increasing social complexities of urban life.

All that was still in the future when Black Rock opened its doors. New York in 1965 stood at the summit of the good modern life. In many ways it was still the 1950s, only slicker, more prosperous, more cosmopolitan, without the sentimental suburban nationalism of the immediate postwar years. The modernity of that moment was remarkably layered. It was the peak of the Jet Set years, but you could still drive along the West Side Highway and review the great trans-Atlantic liners—the Queens, the France, the United States, all symbols of an earlier generation's idea of the modern. The Rockettes were still kicking, even if the kick in the whole idea of "Radio City" was gloriously out of line with the times. The first discos had arrived, though veneered with the supper-club élan of the word "discotheque." Good Design furniture still served its ambivalent role as a symbol of social progress and a sign of elite good taste. The crisp International Style look of The Four Seasons co-existed with the French swag of Le Pavillon, itself a remnant of an earlier embodiment of the modern, the 1939 World's Fair.

In 1965 New York again hosted a World's Fair, though the effect of this one was not to reinforce the appeal of "the modern" but rather to call it into question. Conceived to celebrate the city's pre-eminence, the 1964-65 fair turned out to be a shapeless mess. Part of the problem was redundancy; the city

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hardly needed to trump up an international tribute to its cultural prestige, and no one needed to go to Queens to find out why. But the failure was also due to a breakdown in the ideology that had spawned World's Fairs, and shaped Modern architecture as well.

From their origin in London in 1851, World's Fairs were showcases for industrialization and the social progress it fostered. At the 1851 fair, Paxton's Crystal Palace gave the public its first exposure to what would become the Modern machine aesthetic. By 1964, however, the industrial ethos had lost the strength to serve as an organizing principle. The car manufacturers were back, trying to put us through the same old Futurama paces that had worked in 1939. But who wanted to dream of cars and highways when to get to the fairgrounds they'd had to reckon with the Long Island Expressway? People didn't need more wonder appliances. They wanted to consume images, and in this the fair delivered handsomely: Michelangelo's *Pietà*, the world's largest cheddar cheese, Disney robots, Les Poupées de Paris, and a full-scale replica of a Flemish village circa 1800.

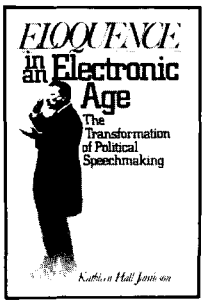
Another late Saarinen project grasped the message lying beneath the chaos: the fair's IBM Pavilion, conceived in collaboration with Charles Eames. Saarinen and Eames had agreed that the pavilion should be "unarchitectural," that visitors should "remember the experience and not the architecture." The experience was images, few of them of IBM products. Seated on moving bleachers, visitors ascended ninety feet into an egg-shaped theater of molded plastic called "The Information Machine." There they were bombarded by a thirty-minute mix of animated, still, and live-action images, projected onto twenty-two screens of different shapes and sizes. Though the pavilion was located on the "Pool of Industry," it looked beyond modern mechanics toward the shores of consumer imagery and the media that dispensed it.

To go from the IBM pavilion to Black Rock is to go from twenty-two screens to the millions controlled by CBS—and into the mind of the visionary behind the power conferred by that control. William Paley did not just step into a position of media power. He built television from nothing. In his memoir, *As It Happened*, Paley also recounts the building of a self: the childhood education in style from reading *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*; the career change from manufacturing (the family cigar business) to media (radio ads for a stogie called La Palina); the first marriage to the former wife of a Hearst; the country estate purchased from a Pulitzer.

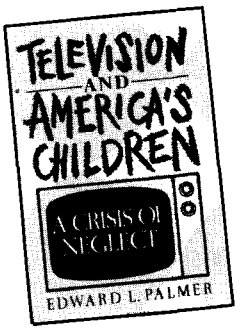
By the time Paley built Black Rock, it was no longer just speculation that the power of electronic media would far surpass that of print. Kennedy's administration had established the media's power to influence events; and Johnson's career (supported by a fortune built on the awarding of a CBS radio affiliation in 1938) dramatized the media's power to create them. As Johnson came to understand, particularly after the Tet offensive, presidential power had become a shadow of media power. Who needed the Joint Chiefs if you had Walter Cronkite and "I Love Lucy"? And politics was only part of the story. In 1964 Marshal McLuhan's *Understanding Media* probed the ways television had begun to alter our perception of space and redraw the borders between public and private life.

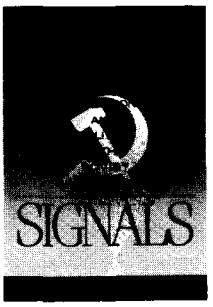
The CBS Building is an exercise in the poetics of media power as a supreme but unauthorized institution. Like the IBM Pavilion, it makes a presence of absence, though one unredeemed here by a media show. When you're heading up Sixth Avenue, the building is concealed by its neighbors until you've reached it; and if it's night, and you're in a taxi, the building is invisible even when you're gliding past it. You stare out the window into

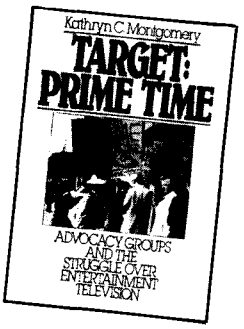
Media Messages from Oxford



Eloquence in an Electronic Age
The Transformation of Political Speechmaking
KATHLEEN HALL JAMIESON
"A brilliant and engrossing study of how American rhetoric has changed over the years.... Rich in anecdote, often extremely funny, scholarly, and somewhat unsettling."
– The Washington Post Book World
320 pp.; paper $9.95







from the *Communication & Society* series

Television and America's Children
A Crisis of Neglect
EDWARD L. PALMER
"Books on television and children have been common in the past, but there are not many today that do as good a job of summing up what is known about – and what is wrong with – American television for children as this one does."
– Choice
224 pp. paper $7.95

Split Signals
Television and Politics in the Soviet Union
ELLEN MICKIEWICZ
"A groundbreaking effort.... [It] comes at a very important time when both the Soviets and the U.S. are telling their people a lot more about each other."
– Flora Lewis, Foreign Affairs Columnist for *The New York Times*
304 pp. paper $9.95

Target: Prime Time
Advocacy Groups and the Struggle Over Entertainment Television
KATHRYN C. MONTGOMERY
"A remarkably detailed inside look at how, starting in the 1970s, the various 'advocacy groups' turned prime-time television into a virtual battle zone."
– Marie Winn, *The New York Times Book Review*
288 pp.; paper $8.95

At better bookstores or directly from

OXFORD PAPERBACKS
Oxford University Press • 200 Madison Avenue • New York, NY 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what looks like empty space—prime time blackout. The tinted windows, the peek-aboo columns deepen the impression of restraint so powerful it speaks of far greater power held within.

These effects were carefully planned. Paley spent months hunting down the perfect site from which this nearly invisible architecture could be "seen" to its best advantage. After Saarinen's death, when he and Stanton became virtual collaborators in the design, Paley ordered full-scale mock-ups of the columns, set them up in the country, and adjusted their proportions. Stanton (known to his colleagues as "Mr. Image") combined a training in psychology and a passion for design in overseeing every detail of this cathedral of electronic faith. What the building said was that media power came from the masking of power. The media's mastery of events was emphasized by concealment: it was better to be the puppeteer than the puppet.

Paley's traditionally decorated office suite—it was, along with the boardroom, the only part of the building exempt from Stanton's Total Design—was another form of concealment. Antique-filled, memento-lined, the office propelled the chairman imaginatively back to a time when media power had not usurped political power. It spoke instead of patrician power, of a mellowed tradition of public service. It aligned CBS with the image of privileged disinterest, symbolically distancing it from money-grubbing, from the pursuit of power for its own sake. In this office, the chairman functioned as his own puppet, pulling the strings of an insouciant aristocrat name William S. Paley.

This style of tightly controlled discretion is light years away from the media age of million dollar anchors, news re-enactments, and movie-star politicians. And Black Rock stands at some distance from buildings by Philip Johnson and Helmut Jahn (another reformed Miesian). Far from being shunned, like Saarinen, for adopting an aesthetic of packaging, imagery, and novelty, these architects found themselves in the 1980s at the center of the profession precisely because they had mastered the art of architecture on those terms. Urged on by corporate clients and a fawning press toward heights of whimsy beyond the Expressionists' wildest dreams, Post-Modern architects completed the transition from machines to media as the source of an ethos. Their buildings grab us as though they had only thirty seconds of our time.

So perhaps it is fitting that Paley has commissioned Johnson to design what each, evidently, regards as his swan song, the Museum of Broadcasting now under construction just down the block from CBS. A better idea might be to convert Black Rock itself into a museum; at least that would ensure its upkeep. For since 1986, when Laurence Tisch assumed control of CBS, the building has been allowed to deteriorate. Once crisp interiors have yellowed; a reduced maintenance staff, though movingly devoted to this building as the physical embodiment of Paley's vision, lacks sufficient resources to preserve its luster. A feeling of loss pervades the building, as though a center of power had become its own tombstone. Office space is rented out to tenants; there are rumors that the building will be put up for sale, like the other assets Tisch sold off to pay for the fight against Ted Turner's takeover attempt.

Still, even though the media empire it once housed is history, Saarinen's building remains a powerful monument to Paley and the cultural forces he deployed. Paley is that exquisite modern figure, the great man who is also the impersonation of a great man. Saarinen's building is the architectural equivalent: a great Modern building disguised as a great Modern building. It is at once a monument of Modern architecture and a stunning black void where Modernism's towers of light had lately beckoned. To look at it today is to behold a dark cloud passing over the radiant Modern sun. And, when the cloud moves away, there is a big picture tube in place of the sun, regaling a captive public with cheap jokes to a lot of canned applause. •

It's . . .

BY VERONICA GENG

The Complete Monty Python's Flying Circus: All the Words

(Pantheon, 2 volumes, 325 pp. and 349 pp., $12.95 each)

Luton. Is that a real place? It would be a mistake to find out. If you happen to know, it would be better to have some manipulative person convince you that there's been a misunderstanding. As Americans who have very little or no idea, we fulfill Luton's sublime destiny, which is to be possibly a city, town, hamlet, or other type of location somewhere in England, veiled in deliberate yet baffling innuendo. Unlike Levittown, Larchmont, Langley, Lompoc, or Leavenworth, Luton has connotations of . . . something. Or else it's a sphinx without a secret, a neutral carrier for the pure idea of reference to . . . something.

We know this much: Mr. Harry Bagot, the finalist in the All-England Summarize Proust Competition who only got as far as page one of *Swann's Way* because he used too much of his fifteen seconds on a general appraisal of the work, was from Luton; under the modern British criminal-justice system, according to Supt. Harry "Boot-In" Swalk, "garroting is confined almost entirely to Luton"; on February 22, 1966, Luton Airport got blown up by Dinsdale Piranha, the racketeer who nailed men's heads to the floor if they "transgressed the unwritten law," but you can get *near* Luton by hijacking a scheduled flight to Cuba and asking the pilot to throw you out onto a pile of hay at Basingstoke; and in the 1970 elections the normally sensible Luton constituency gave Alan Jones (Sensible Party) 9,112 votes, Kevin Phillips-Bong (Slightly Silly) nought, and Tarquin Fin-tim-lin-bin-whin-bim-lin-bus-stop-F'tang-F'tang-Olé-Biscuitbarrel (Silly) 12,441.

A man from England recently told a man here that if you know the "exact suburbs" mentioned on Monty Python's Flying Circus, the show is "even better." This idea of Monty Python as topical satire, fully enjoyable only by an audience intimate with parliamentary politics, BBC programming, Common Market groceries, and the psychosexual geography of a small, class-conscious country teeming with local mannerisms—this idea is wrong. Not only is it wrong, it sounds suspiciously like the Highland Spokesman interrupting the show to point out that a poet whose "name was quite clearly given as McTeagle . . . was throughout wearing the Cameron tartan."

Can the hyperknowledgeable imagine what poetry Monty Python makes in minds relatively knowledge-free?

> Yes . . . no! No! No!
> Yes in only three years. Er, I tell a lie, four, be fair, five . . . just the seven years.
> That I don't know. I just don't know. I really just don't know. I'm afraid I really

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

just don't know. I have to tell you that I'm afraid even I really just don't know.
It's a great-idea-but-possibly-not-and-I'm-not-being-indecisive.
No, I shall deny that to the last breath in my body. (*superintendent nods*)
Oh. Sorry, yes.

Of course not. That was why the BBC originally thought the show was "too British" to cross the Atlantic, and why, even after it crossed in 1974, the Pythons did a few live American concerts where they misguidedly tailored their familiar lines with American references. Well, forgiven is that awkward moment when the Pythons' transvestite Judges patronized us by talking about Melvin Belli instead of the Scottish Assizes. The show has been a success here for fifteen years, on public television and now cable reruns. The special-knowledge question would seem to be moot. We like Python's own words; we like them in our own way.

Off-spin bowling, Cecily Courtneige, RAF Ola Pola, lavatorial, m'lud, my other lud, off-license, kosher car park, diocesan lovely, crumpet over sixteen, Fyffe-Chulmleigh Spoon for Latin Elegiacs, Cardinal Armand du Plessis de Richelieu, masonic tendencies, Prebendary "Chopper" Harris, Colin "Chopper" Mozart, Radio Four, Abu Simnel, typical bleeding Rhondda, git, Kemal Attaturk, great poovy po-nagger, Ron Vibbentrop, midfield cognoscento, owl of Thebes, Vethpathian, Rrrhodesia, Watney's Red Barrel and calamares and two veg, the larch—spectacularly wordy, the two-volume edition of *The Complete Monty Python's Flying Circus: All the Words* reopens "that old vexed question of what is going on. . . . Where do we stand? Where do we sit? Where do we come? Where do we go? What do we do? What do we say? What do we eat? What do we drink? What do we think?"

Unlike the show in performance, the printed words make you confront your own mental processes. If you're overjoyed by two pages of cricket language without having the slightest comprehension of why, no actor's enchantment disguises this terrifying fact. Not that the words "Danish Fimboe" don't carry the imprint of John Cleese's lips tightening against his front teeth. (The book has fifty-six photos of such moments, and also brief summaries of Terry Gilliam's cartoon montages, such as "ANIMATION: *one dozen communist revolutions.*") But the scripts aren't comedy "material"; they don't depend on delivery to put them across. Even the indications of actors' business seem to have been initially crafted into the writing ("*leans back as if having imparted a great secret*"). As actors, Graham Chapman, Cleese, Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin embodied and elaborated their writing. But they didn't have to.

MONTY PYTHON BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

There are forty-five scripts, and each one is structured like a—"A murder? . . . No . . . no . . . not a murder . . . no what's like a murder only begins with B?" The first few episodes rely on some routine sketch-comedy devices: reversals like "Bicycle Repair Man" (everyone else in town dressed as Superman) and "Hell's Grannies" (a dumb idea redeemed when the writers impatiently change it to "vicious gangs of keep-left signs"), and takeoffs of TV forms, like the secret-vice documentary "The Mouse Problem," with testimony by a psychiatrist. ("Look at arson—I mean, how many of us can honestly say that at one time or another he hasn't set fire to some great public building. I know I have.")

But sketch comedy makes its point, rests its case, and moves on to the next sketch. It couldn't contain the Pythons, who had the alertness to pursue what really interested them (easier said than done): people's habit of arguing any point ad infinitum, bringing in all kinds of irrelevant information. Early on, sketches were followed or interrupted by viewers' letters ("Dear Sir, I object to being objected to by the last letter, before my drift has become apparent") and by "Vox Pops" man-in-the-street comments. ("I mean, er, blimey, blimey if they're not keen enough to stay here when they're 'ere, why should we allow them back at, er, the taxpayers' expense? I mean, be fair, I mean, I don't eat squirrels, do I?") Nobody gives it a rest. That spirit soon evolved into a thoroughgoing comic procedure.

The whole show became a volatile contest: all the information people are trying to use versus all the ways it doesn't apply:

ERIC IDLE: Is your wife a . . . goer . . . eh? Know what I mean? Nudge nudge. Know what I mean? Say no more . . . know what I mean?

TERRY JONES: I beg your pardon?

IDLE: Your wife . . . does she, er, does she "go"—eh? eh? eh? Know what I mean, know what I mean? Nudge nudge. Say no more.

[Jones still doesn't follow.]

IDLE: She's been around, eh? Been around?

JONES: She's traveled. She's from Purley.

IDLE: Oh . . . oh. Say no more, say no more. Say no more—*Purley*, say no more.

And the capper:

JONES: Look, are you insinuating something?

Idle's dervish indirection and Jones's literal plodding are mutually useless. There's a tiny outcome (hint of possibility that other party has something in mind), but it's a dust speck stirred up in the crosscurrents of false comprehension versus incomprehension. And

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

here's an example of why it's better *not* to recognize "exact suburbs": if "Purley" is weightless, it stays aloft instead of hitting ground as a Purley joke.

The Pythons were resisting what is usually meant by "satire": some folly is exposed, and the light-giving satirist goes home with the upper hand (or, in a few cases, to jail with a sense of moral superiority). "Nudge Nudge" is a goof on all that. It's introduced by Idle as a naughty schoolboy: "I written a sketch," he says, as one of his mates, Jones, daringly blurts, "Bottom!" to shrieks of laughter. And it ends with a bogus punchline where Idle blows his savoir faire and asks what it's like to have "er . . . slept . . . with a lady"—a standard satirical exposé of prurience as repression, disclaimed by "*enormous artificial laugh on sound track.*"

Monty Python was more interested in a truth that satirists hate to think about: people don't want to change their minds, and rarely change them in response to the lessons of satire. It's hard to face this without getting cynical. Positively embracing it is the heart of the Python's style. Renouncing satire's ineffectual upper hand, they took all their considerable knowledge and redistributed it across the board, so you can never tell which character will know what. "One on't cross beams gone owt askew on treddle," says Chapman as a cap-in-hand millworker, and is asked what on earth that means. "*I* don't know. Mr. Wentworth just told me to come in here and say there was trouble at the mill, that's all. I didn't expect a kind of Spanish Inquisition."

Even the silliest characters are intellectually fired up about mollusk sexuality or the right way to put down your budgie. A housewife in a laundromat has Jean-Paul Sartre's home phone number, because she met him and Madam S. on holiday; the joke isn't that it's improbable, but that it's exactly the sort of thing people claim. And there's always a chance it's true. This is a surprising and accurate observation of life, and the Pythons go at it with such selfless zeal that they make conventional satire of hypocritical egos look like an ego trip.

Topicality can often be felt behind the show, but it's vestigial, as if the writers had used it just to generate situations to take off from. Maybe there was a coal strike when they wrote about miners arguing the date of the Treaty of Utrecht and the definition of a "metope." "Meanwhile, at Dagenham the unofficial strike committee at Fords have increased their demands to thirteen reasons why Henry III was a bad king." Maybe there's a passing swipe at petty or arcane labor negotiations, but that's a familiar point easily scored. What's Pythonesque is that no matter how much you know, it still won't be relevant. Foreman: "Break it up, break it up. . . . This isn't the senior common room at All Souls, it's the bloody coal face."

The characters on Monty Python's Flying Circus can't find the right contexts for what they know—like this crime boss with his gang of robbers:

> Oh, you dumb cluck! We spent weeks organizing this job. Reg rented a room across the road and filmed the people going in and out every day. Vic spent three weeks looking at watch catalogs . . . until he knew the price of each one backwards, and now I'm not going to risk the whole raid just for the sake of breaking the law.

The show is by nature sympathetic to states of incomprehension and confusion. That's why its special references and high-culture allusions don't intimidate Americans or other ill-educated or out-of-it English-speaking people. It takes nothing for granted ("so-called Mao Zedong"), except that the audience will hear how ignorance and knowledge are being deployed. Expertise, for instance, can be a means of confirming one's own prejudices, wet-blanketing, or lying. Shopkeeper trying to sell dead parrot: "The Norwegian Blue prefers kipping on its back. Beautiful bird, lovely plumage." The same goes for inexpertise. Same actor, Cleese, as merchant banker grappling with new concept of donating a pound to orphans: "I don't follow this at all, I mean, I don't want to seem stupid but it looks to me as though I'm a pound down on the whole deal."

As the show matured, these clashes got fine-tuned and densely orchestrated beyond description, though amazingly enough there were always just two instruments: "The cat sat on the mat. And now the Battle of Trafalgar." The final episode, titled "Party Political Broadcast," is an apocalyptic fantasia that takes liberal apprehensions to their desired conclusion, via the Third Most Awful Family in Britain (the Garibaldis, obsessed with Rhodesia and constipation), rich people who scream "Super," a cash-

North of Night

(On the summer solstice)

To a mind uprooted from
a shaking hour's all but upright nap
    it made sense
to view our poleward journey not
as the enactment of any human plan
but something conceived and piloted
    solely by the plane—

    as though *it* realized that,
this time of year, the way to pursue any
    sun gone west
was not by going west; no—north . . . Maine, Nova
Scotia, Labrador, and that in time our flight
would open, over Greenland, on groundless concourses
    where the wings would float

    through light undimmed by dusk, high
over snowy cloudbanks, higher still over shelved
    hills of snow.
Day everlasting: north of night: and to see in this
a place where metal was meant to find voice
(as anvils ring to their mallets, the sawn tin
    whistles in its vise,

    nails call *out* when clasped within
a hammer's claw) and where rare flocks of us
    (metal birds,
homing birds) were destined to gather, and we
but the earliest arrivals to an immense,
wheeling, gleam-relayed rendezvous—
    even that made sense.

BRAD LEITHAUSER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crazed doctor who can't understand what a stethoscope is doing in his bag, a girl who has had twelve babies since lunch, and a racist media expedition to Africa, where the Warwickshire cricket team is defeated by the hostile black Batsmen of the Kalahari ("C.U. PRATT KILLED OUTRIGHT, BOWLED ODINGA — O").

One American viewer (who went to Harvard during the 1970s student strikes and so feels uneducated) says, "It's like a game you didn't know you could play." Python never outpaces the audience, because the playing field is level. If the "girls of Oakdene High School, Upper Fifth Science" can perform the invasion of Normandy ("Engine room, stand by to feed the cat"), so can we. Anyway, you can't feel stupid while watching a circus of people who think the astrological signs are "Aquarius, Sagittarius, Derry and Toms, Basil"; insist on giving urine at a blood bank; have to look up "inner life" in the dictionary or ask "Not for sale, what does that mean?"; and translate the Hungarian phrase "Can you direct me to the station?" as "please fondle my bum." Two "pepperpots" (as the Pythons called their "middle-aged lower-middle-class women"), both named Mrs. Zambesi:

SECOND ZAMBESI: . . . I caught swamp fever in the Tropics.

FIRST ZAMBESI: You've never even been to the Tropics. You've never been south of Sidcup.

SECOND ZAMBESI: You can catch it off lampposts.

FIRST ZAMBESI: Catch what?

SECOND ZAMBESI: I don't know, I'm all confused.

The early 1970s, the years just before Monty Python came to American television, were eerily foreseen by the Confuse-a-Cat sketch (recorded in 1969). The Chicago Seven, Kent State, Manson, Calley, Nixon in China, nolo contendere, Saturday Night Massacre, Patty Hearst, eighteen-minute gap: "*Napoleon points to sedan chair and it changes into dustbin. Man in towel runs back on to stage and jumps in dustbin. He looks out and the penguin appears from the other dustbin and hits him on the head with a raw chicken. Shot of cat still unimpressed.*" There was a sense that small amounts of banal information could be parlayed into extravagant power (Haldeman and Ehrlichman, Woodward and Bernstein), which would then be snatched away like a toy rodent or a ball of string. And there was a common syndrome of overstimulated paralysis: I might be right, they might be right, who knows?

In popular culture, this led to some provocative genre mixes and crossovers, but at the expense of straight-ahead forces like Motown. It seemed that the exclusiveness of 1950s hip had married the amorphous receptivity of the 1960s, and the move now was to redefine confusion as cool. Comedy was Woody Allen's neurotic surrealism, the final days of "Laugh-In" 's non sequiturs, and the exemplary behavior of Don Rickles—rigidly fending off others with his impenetrable, unanswerable mix of insults and wheedling, a clinical case of narcissistic character disorder.

When the Pythons came on TV around the country in 1974-75, they represented health. They were confused, too, but far from paralyzed. And there was honest realism in their relentless struggle, against heavy odds, for reason and clarity:

> Our chief weapon is surprise . . . surprise and fear . . . fear and surprise . . . our two weapons are fear and surprise . . . and ruthless efficiency. Our *three* weapons are fear and surprise and ruthless efficiency and an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope. . . . Our *four* . . . no . . . *amongst* our weapons . . . amongst our weaponry are such elements as fear, surprise . . . I'll come in again.

Although they had individual craziness (Palin's unsocialized glee, the self-hypnotized authority of Chapman, who died last year but lives as the definitive voice of tottering power), the group was an example of creative sanity, actively addressing our worst fears of meaninglessness. Not since Sid Caesar have comedians seemed so manly, yet playing women they were as comfortable and plausible as real women; they were wholesome in every sense. Monty Python wasn't a kitsch artifact of another culture, like Benny Hill; it was alive in the moment. It still seems that way.

Why? I have to tell you that I'm afraid even I really just don't know. The uneducated Harvard graduate I mentioned says one of the important things Python did was "chart the areas of what people actually do know," and maybe that is ever refreshing:

"FOC" means Free of Charge, and egg, bacon, spam, and sausage doesn't have as much spam in it as spam, egg, sausage, and spam. Synonyms for "dead" range from "resting" to "joined the choir invisible." The legal definition of "Ratings conscious" is "Transmitting bland garbage, m'lud." The advantages of voting Norwegian in the next election are "An industrial re-investment rate of fourteen percent . . . and girls with massive knockers." People also know things they're reluctant to admit, like: When you live in a building that will fall down if you cease to believe in it, the place where you used to live—an eighteen-room villa overlooking Nice—sounds better. They know things they don't know they know: woman on quiz show correctly guesses "Henri Bergson?" and then says, "Ooh, that was lucky. I never even heard of him. . . . I don't like darkies." And there's mass know-how about nothing: "So far today we've had five hours' batting from England and already they're nought for nought . . . and no shot at all. Extremely well not played there. . . . Yes, beautifully not done anything about. . . . A superb shot of no kind whatsoever. I well remember Plum Warner leaving a very similar ball alone in 1732."

I have a theory, and it is mine and not a theory by Anne Elk (Miss), whose own theory is "All brontosauruses are thin at one end, much much thicker in the middle and then thin again at the far end." My theory is that Monty Python successfully crossed the Atlantic not in spite of being too British, or because the Beatles had made us more British than we knew, or the Britishisms just had a funny sound, but because the show *is* too British. An American woman who didn't know what lupins were says, "People talk about what you're missing, but they don't talk about what you're getting by missing."

One thing we get is relief from life's constant pressure to get everything. Sometimes it's appropriate not to understand, as Python admits in a belated apology for the puzzling North Malden boosterism propaganda that keeps cropping up during their Icelandic Saga. It's not our fault if we can't answer scholarly questions like "The Magna Carta—was it a document signed at Runnymede in 1213 by King John pledging independence to the English barons, or was it a piece of chewing gum on a bedspread in Dorset?" And accepting certain mysteries is quite different from courting confusion. Americans are an ideal Python audience (and maybe the Pythons, without knowing it, aspired to find us), because when we hear "Reginald Maulding" or "third test against the West Indies" or "Webb's Wonder" without registering precise or any meanings, what we're getting is a giddy sense of the void that Monty Python always has its eye on.

Mrs. Neves of 24 Parker Street (Jones) takes her shopping basket, goes out the door, and finds herself clutching her little scarf on the ("*rain-lashed, heaving, wind-tossed*") deck of the Newhaven Lifeboat. That's the kind of ecstatic moment that the Pythons took all the way in the last movie they made as a group, *The Meaning of Life*, where the sets now and then open onto a starry cosmos. Call it Luton or Purley, the senior common room at All Souls or the bloody coal face—it's the same all over.

VERONICA GENG is a staff writer at *The New Yorker* and the author most recently of *Love Trouble Is My Business* (Harper & Row).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Voltaire's Vomit

BY STANISLAW BARANCZAK

Hamletmachine and Other Texts for the Stage
by Heiner Müller
edited and translated by Carl Weber

(Performing Arts Journal Publications, 144 pp., $9.95)

The Battle: Plays, Prose, Poems
by Heiner Müller
edited and translated by Carl Weber

(Performing Arts Journal Publications, 176 pp., $23.95, $10.95 paper)

Explosion of a Memory: Writings
by Heiner Müller
edited and translated by Carl Weber

(Performing Arts Journal Publications, 164 pp., $19.95, $9.95 paper)

Witold Gombrowicz's last play, *Operetta*, published three years before his death in 1969, is a hilarious vision of a twentieth-century global revolution presented as a "divinely idiotic" show with arias and declamations. An accessory but important part is played by a certain professor who typifies a modern egghead trying to make sense of the historical process. His own intellectual processes, however, are interrupted time and again by a physiological reaction beyond his control. Each time he attempts to utter a philosophical statement, his repulsion toward the world and toward himself induces an overpowering bout of nausea. Instead of a profound comment, he is able to produce only a resounding burp, of the kind that heralds an imminent surge of vomit.

Forgive me, dear reader, if you're reading this at breakfast, but I can find no better way to give you a foretaste of the work of another Central European, an East German, playwright. Echoes of burping, throwing up, and even more compromising bodily sounds can be heard loud and clear in Heiner Müller's plays, some of which have been staged, to much critical acclaim, in otherwise well-bred places such as Cambridge, Massachusetts. After the publication of his *Hamletmachine* in 1984, we now have been offered two more collections of his plays, prose, poems, essays, speeches, and interviews. I have no idea whether Müller has ever read Gombrowicz, but the reader of *his* plays is constantly reminded of *Operetta*'s belching professor.

Take one of Müller's most renowned plays, *Gundling's Life/Frederick of Prussia/Lessing's Sleep Dream Scream*. The action starts with Frederick William, King of Prussia, "farting" loudly at a dining room table, after which his son Frederick "demonstratively holds his nose." The play's protagonist, a servile intellectual named Gundling, is subsequently "pissed on" by the king's officers. Soon afterward Frederick "throws up." Then "figures of John Bull and Marianne" devour slices cut off the globe (with "knives they are pulling from corpses of dead Indians and Negroes"), while "burping and farting." A little later Frederick "pokes his nose." Still later he makes Voltaire watch him oppress the local peasants, as a result of which the philosopher "throws up at the footlights." And so it goes.

The figure of the vomiting Voltaire, a new incarnation of Gombrowicz's nauseated professor, is supposed to represent, we understand, the despot's enlightened supporter who is all for him in theory but cannot stomach certain unpleasant practical aspects of his rule. This sort of character has more to do with Müller himself than the playwright's sarcastic attitude toward him might suggest. Until the most recent events in East Germany, Müller was one of the court intellectuals of Erich, King of Prussia, a.k.a. Honecker the Great, while at the same time enjoying in the West a reputation as an independent mind and an innovative artist. At home, he occupied the familiar position of what Miklós Haraszti has called "a state artist," who never ventures beyond the limits of "constructive criticism" in addressing domestic issues. (True, Müller was the first East German playwright to allude on the stage to the officially buried memory of the 1953 workers' rebellion, but that was in a play, *Volokolamsk Highway*, written in 1986: thirty-three years was, one would think, a sufficiently safe lapse of time, even in Honecker's kingdom.)

It was a rule, in the former Eastern bloc countries, that artists who proved their responsibility in handling domestic concerns were given free rein to investigate and to denounce the faults of the West. Sometimes they were even sent abroad for that purpose. Thus, Müller spent 1975-76 in the United States, which was an experience that, Carl Weber assures us in his preface to *Hamletmachine*, "altered his perception of the world." We need such assurance, because otherwise it would be hard to tell what specifically has changed in Müller's outlook over the past fifteen years or so. At least in 1984 he was still "convinced," Weber emphasizes, "that communism ... remains as the only hope left." So what really changed in him as a result of his American experience? "Among other things," the never-failing translator explains, "his view of nature changed." Oh. Indeed, after 1976 the contemplation of America's environmental problems (with which East Germany, as we know, never had to cope) often leads Müller to protest "the catastrophes which mankind is working toward." The only rescue, we are given to understand, may come from that famously rational and humane system, communism.

Any attempt to grasp what it was about the West that provoked such a strong, nauseating repulsion in Müller is considerably hindered by one basic fact: the writer, endowed with some degree of skill when it comes to constructing a dramatic situation, appears to be organically unable to construe a coherent statement in simple discursive language. His "Mülheim Address," a speech on the occasion of winning a prestigious literary prize in West Germany, is mainly composed of such sentences as, "The gravity of the masses, in capitalism the condition, is in a Socialist society the corrective of politics, the blindness of experience is proof of its authenticity." The only more or less

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

comprehensible statement in this presentation is a sentence in which he blames Western "consumption" for "the disappearance of Man": "each item of merchandise a weapon, every supermarket a boot camp." (Think of those millions of poor East Germans who, apparently ill-versed in Müller's works, have disregarded his dire warnings and are now rushing into the deadly embrace of West German supermarkets without suspecting the boot camp brutality that awaits them there.)

Another speech, delivered on the occasion of receiving an even more coveted West German prize, is an even less coherent stream of consciousness. It fluctuates, as far as one can tell, around the figure of Nelson Mandela, who is compared to Ulrike Meinhof in a manner that is apparently approving of both. And in an interview titled "Literature Must Offer Resistance to the Theater," Müller argues quite seriously that in East Germany, as opposed to the West, "there are by far fewer objective reasons to commit suicide. There is no existential fear, no problem to find a job, all that doesn't exist." In sum, his loyalty to the GDR, that well-known paradise on earth, was beyond reproach.

Even in such a marvel of a country, though, he had his share of trouble with the authorities. After his auspicious beginnings as a Brechtian Socialist Realist (which earned him, in 1958, the praise of Walter Ulbricht himself), his lack of prescribed restraint in "constructive criticism" resulted in his expulsion from the Writers Association in 1961, as well as in frequent accusations of "historical pessimism" from the official critics. Weber scrupulously lists all the unpleasant consequences of the playwright's fall from favor. They do not amount to much.

After the expulsion, in any event, he soon returned to the flock, and even received the Erich Weinert medal in 1964. Since then he has functioned as a "state artist" and enjoyed a privileged position rather painlessly. A telling detail: as late as 1973 he wrote, for the Berliner Ensemble, an adaptation of Fyodor Gladkov's novel *Cement*, which is a fabulously crude example of Socialist Realism at its worst; and as late as 1979 he was "quite pleased" with the same play's production by the Berkeley Stage Company. In those years, what would have been jeered off the stage in Warsaw or Budapest could have been taken seriously only by Berlin apparatchiks or Berkeley students.

Until last year Müller served these two kinds of audiences quite efficiently. Without any visible harm to his sense of artistic integrity, he was perfectly able to keep rehashing some of his old Socialist Realist "production plays" for the benefit of East Germany's cultural elites. (*The Scab* was produced at the Deutsches Theater as recently as January 1988.) At the same time, he could impress Western cultural elites with his polemical attitude toward Brecht's agitprop tradition. (As he writes in an essay in 1980, he is chiefly bothered by Brecht's "revolutionary impatience that leads to paternalism, the disease of all Communist Parties.") What impressed the Western opinion-makers even more was the bold way in which he made capitalism and the entire Western tradition confront visions of their irreversible decay and inevitable doom.

The West, as we know, loves it when a progressive Eastern barbarian shakes it a little and predicts its imminent demise, particularly if it is done with the use of appropriately bloody images and strong language:

> Give us this day our daily murder
> Since thine is nothingness Nausea
> Of the lies which are believed
> By the liars and nobody else
> Nausea
> Of the lies which are believed Nausea
> Of the mugs of the manipulators marked
> By their struggle for positions votes bank accounts
> Nausea A chariot armed with scythes sparkling with punchlines
> I walk through streets stores Faces
> Scarred by the consumers battle Poverty
> Without dignity . . .
> Hail Coca Cola
> A kingdom
> For a murderer . . .
> I retreat into my entrails. I take my seat in my shit, in my blood. Somewhere bodies are torn apart so I can dwell in my shit.

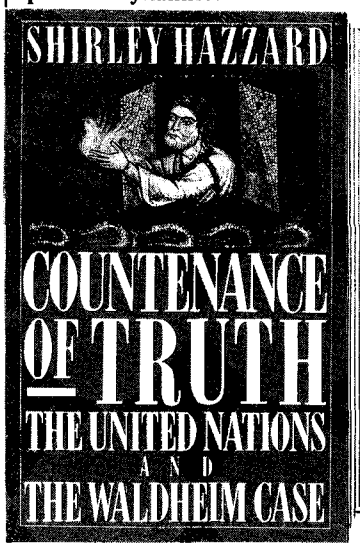
I can imagine the applause that these words of Hamlet's—particularly the reference to Coca-Cola, that opium of the masses—aroused in the audience at the Théâtre Gérard Philipe in Saint Denis, where Müller's *Hamletmachine* had its world premiere in 1979. Yelling about being nauseated with Western consumerism (or, even better, demonstrating your nausea's concrete results like the weak-stomached Voltaire) can have such an electrifying artistic effect on us. Particularly if we have been prudent enough to make our dinner reservations in one of Saint Denis's nicer restaurants for *after* the show.

In literature, there are two kinds of scatology. One is the free-spirited, joyful, all-embracing, Rabelaisian kind, in which burping, farting, and other officially unmentionable functions of the bodily system find their place as some of the countless *naturalia*, which, as wise

"Unexcelled investigative reporting."
—Morton Mintz, author of *At Any Cost*

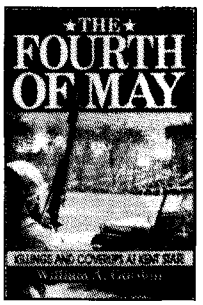
"An unsparing indictment of the United Nations, which persuasively presents the Waldheim scandal as merely symptomatic of structural defects. . . . **A damning case, passionately made."** —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Hazzard's often shocking exposé is political dynamite."—*Publishers Weekly*



At bookstores now
Portions of this book appeared in *The New Yorker*
VIKING Penguin USA

THE FOURTH OF MAY
Killings and Coverups at Kent State



by William A. Gordon

In the two decades since National Guard gunfire sprayed into a group of student demonstrators, killing four, the term "Kent State" has created its own painful niche in the national consciousness. In this major reappraisal of the Kent State tragedy, William A. Gordon examines the various theories and charges that surfaced during and after the investigations and trials, sifting fact from fiction and placing the issues and events into final perspective. His conclusions—at times controversial—reassemble the parts of the Kent State puzzle into a coherent whole.

243 pages (Photographs) • Cloth $21.95

At better bookstores, or order directly from

PROMETHEUS BOOKS
Call toll free (800) 421-0351
In NY State (716) 837-2475
700 E. Amherst St. Buffalo, NY 14215
Add $2.50 p&h; NY State residents add sales tax.
TNR#30083

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people know, *non sunt turpia*. In this case, four-letter words, physiological images, and below-the-waist interests are just outward signs of the writer's generous acceptance of whatever life brings along, as well as expressions of his unwillingness to yield to any restrictive power that might attempt to curb his unbridled imagination and vocabulary. What is human is taken in toto, all of its triviality and its vulgarity included.

The other kind of scatology is the exact opposite of this sort of magnanimous consent to the human. It calls on the most readily available wording (four-letter words come to mind more easily than complex figures of speech) for outbursts of disgust with humanity. Such outbursts can be heard particularly often in the mouths of self-proclaimed humanists, who believe in the innate goodness of human beings so much that any experience of human evil makes them shudder. They would love humanity unreservedly, were it not for all those people. Instead of being uniformly good, pure, and noble, as the humanist would like them to be, real people turn out to be disturbingly diverse, to display bad attitudes, trivial traits, foolish ideas. In cases like these, scatology serves as more than a means of venting the writer's frustration, anger, or hatred: it is a punishment, the most readily available method of slapping humanity's behind in retaliation for its bad behavior. How easy it is to equate the human world with shit. All it takes is to pronounce loudly a single monosyllabic word. Or, with even less effort, to "throw up at the foot lights."

By making such a fuss about Müller's scatology, I do not mean to enlist in Jesse Helms's vice squad to police indecency in the arts. I mean only to show how cheap an artist Müller is. It is amazing how gullibly theater directors and critics in the West have swallowed and digested the rather foul substance of his weltanschauung. In its earlier Socialist Realist and its later postmodernist (whatever that may mean) versions, Müller's dramatic and theatrical vision stems directly from the utopian humanist's disgust with actual human beings. The direct application of such a disgust to people's real lives may have—as the inhabitants of the actual utopias of Eastern and Central Europe know well—ominous consequences. If the utopian humanist happens to be in power, his way of adjusting his subjects to the Procrustean bed of his vision usually results in cutting off victims' heads or in stretching their necks until something snaps. (Mandelstam understood this perfectly: after hearing the official explanation of a wave of arrests in the 1930s, he remarked, "We didn't realize we were in the paws of humanists.")

In art, of course, the consequences are usually not that serious. The worst that may happen if a playwright writes a play whose purpose is to prove his utopian point rather than to portray concrete human characters in concrete human conflict is that he ends up writing a bad play. That is the case with virtually everything that Müller has written. The utopian spirit that has driven him all these years is essentially the same in his early imitations of Brecht's *Lehrstücke* and his later imitations of Beckett or Edward Bond. It does not make much of a difference, technically speaking, whether he employs the poetics of the Socialist Realist "production play" or what he calls his own poetics of "synthetic fragment." In both these sets of theatrical machinery, the slashing or snapping sounds can constantly be heard. All the characters come out decapitated or overstretched. They fit the prescribed ideological size, but they have the disadvantage of being lifeless.

The "positive" utopianism of Müller's Socialist Realist years has exactly the same artistically devastating effect as the more recent "negative" utopianism one finds in his catastrophist visions of the West's future. And scatology serves in both cases as the easiest way of expressing disgust with humanity and punishing those who are held responsible for its sorry state. The only difference may be that this (if you will forgive the expression) eschatology of scatology puts more emphasis on saving the Socialist heroes of labor in the former case and on condemning Capitalist exploiters in the latter case.

Compare two plays, his early *The Scab* and his later *Germania Death in Berlin*. The former was written in 1956 and published in 1957. (The dates, again, are startling: in most other Central European countries those were precisely the years of open rebellion against the legacy of Socialist Realism, with its typical "production plays" like this one.) It has at its center, as befits the genre, a positive hero. He is a Stakhanovite bricklayer who hits upon a bright idea of repairing furnaces in his plant while it is in operation. The uninterrupted production is supposed to save the state hundreds of thousands of marks. The fact that he ruins his own and other workers' health, as well as lowers wage levels by pushing up norms, does not deter him from his noble pursuit of the common good.

Neither does his apparent idiocy strike the author as a sad product of the madness of the totalitarian system, as it could not help but appear even to his obediently applauding East German audiences, from the first performance in 1958 to the most recent (and, one hopes, the last) one in 1988. If there is a reason to thank Weber for translating and publishing this pitiful piece, it is that it vividly demonstrates how dreadful the official culture in East Germany must have been all these years. Except for Romania, there is no other country of the defunct Eastern bloc in which a performance of *The Scab* in 1988 would not have been disrupted by bursts of laughter.

But *The Scab*, as we learn from the translator, was in its time an almost recklessly bold play. The typical approach would have consisted, after all, in making all the representatives of the working class line up unanimously behind the positive hero, to the point of jumping with him into the furnace's flames, so that the radiant future might be forged a little bit sooner. "Müller's approach," Weber writes, "was far more critical, offering contradictory characters caught in, and torn by, the struggle 'between the old and the new.' " In other words, there are workers in the play who have the nerve to accuse our hero of contributing to their exploitation. If nothing else, the play's title (in the original it is *Der Lohnderücker*, or "someone who lowers other people's wages") reveals that the author was well aware of this kind of perspective on his hero. But the title is meant to be ironic. Müller's protagonist is nothing but a chaste hero of labor. His opponents are nothing but ignorant enemies of the people. The way that Müller characterizes them by appropriately programming their stage behavior is highly significant:

> (*Zemke spits on the floor. Pause.*)
>
> A WORKER: I just don't want to kill myself, that's all.
> Piecework is murder.
>
> (*Zemke has broken into the HO* [Handels Organization] *booth, he drags a case of beer out. While doing it, he steps on packaged butter.*)
>
> KARRAS: Step off the butter, Zemke.
>
> ZEMKE: I shit on butter. . . (*drinks with big gulps . . .*)

The class enemy not only steals beer; he also drinks it "with big gulps" (every beer drinker knows the inevitable consequence), not to mention spitting on the communal floor, trampling the butter that belongs to the working people of his Socialist homeland, and (of course) using the word "shit." There is no belching or pissing onstage yet; Stalinist theater was pretty puritanical.

Look what progress Müller's dramatic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

art made between this and 1971, when he wrote his play, or rather his sequence of "synthetic fragments" from the German past, *Germania Death in Berlin*. In one of these fragments we see Hitler in the *Führerbunker* drinking not beer but "gasoline from the can," and obviously mad. He is accompanied by Goebbels "with clubfoot and enormous breasts, very pregnant." At one point Goebbels starts giving birth, aided by enormous Germania dressed as a midwife. A longer quote is necessary here, since the scene of labor interestingly coincides with the arrival of "the three Magi of the Occident":

GUARD OF HONOR: (*Barks.*) FREEDOM DEMOCRACY THE WESTERN WORLD PEACE THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME BETTER DEAD THAN RED ONLY A DEAD INDIAN IS A GOOD INDIAN TO EACH ONE HIS OWN UNITY IN PURITY

GERMANIA: (*With a sigh of relief.*) That worked nicely.

MAGI 1: What did I tell you.

MAGI 2: Indeed. A new spirit . . .

HITLER: At this historical moment . . .

(*An enormous fart from Goebbels, spreading a foul smelling cloud; it topples the three Magi.*)

GUARD OF HONOR: Sieg Heil Sieg Heil Sieg Heil.

(*The three Magi shudder, hold their noses, get up.*)

GOEBBELS: My Führer.

GERMANIA: (*To Hitler.*) I hope it isn't just hot air. You never amounted to much in bed.

(*Hitler growls.*)

MAGI 3: It doesn't smell nice, does it.

MAGI 2: It indeed doesn't smell very nice.

MAGI 1: We shouldn't be petty.

MAGI 3: It's only natural, after all.

MAGI 2: It's human and not alien to me.

Note the final sentence. What is fascinating in this brief history of Western Fart and Civilization is, once again, the punishing role of scatology. Just as in the scene from *Gundling's Life* . . . quoted above, just as in most such pieces of crude agitprop, nothing is left to the reader's or the viewer's imagination. Goebbels must be not merely ridiculed by the addition of breasts and a pregnant belly, he must also be associated with the foul smell, lest the audience have any doubts as to who exactly is the villain (as if what was wrong with this man was flatulence). And the scene is also interesting for the readiness and ease with which Müller puts an equation mark between the Third Reich and Western democracies, between Hitler's Final Solution and America's treatment of Indians, between "Sieg Heil" and "It's human and not alien to me."

That's the way our playwright viewed "FREEDOM DEMOCRACY THE WESTERN WORLD" in 1971, and that's apparently the way he views it now. For Müller's recently published *The Battle* (1989) does provide us with an answer to the inescapable question: What are Müller's current views on the Western world and his own East Germany, now that millions of his compatriots have demonstrated quite unequivocally what they think of these two? The answer is that his views haven't changed that much.

The Battle includes, on its final two pages, a set of three poems titled "Television" that reflect on the events of 1989, from the Beijing massacre to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The poem that treats the latter is called "Selfcritique":

. . . On the tube I see my compatriots
With hands and feet vote against the truth
That forty years ago was my own.
What grave will protect me from my youth?

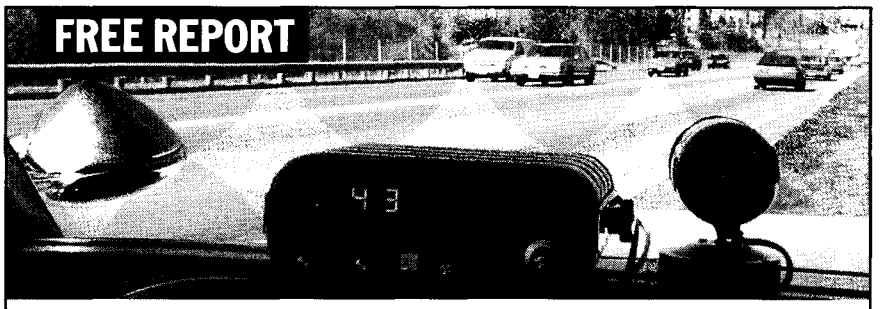
This, at last, sounds like a good-bye to the fizzled ideology, though even after its final flop it still deserves the name of "the truth." (In a recent piece in *Newsweek*, Müller said that German reunification is "deadly boring," and will "deprive Europe of color.") But the Beijing poem, titled "Geography," still sounds very much like the old Müller:

Across from the GREAT HALL OF PEOPLE
The monument of the dead Indians
On the SQUARE OF HEAVENLY PEACE
The track of tanks.

The subtlety of this equation is worth remarking. "The monument of the dead Indians," as the translator explains, stands for the replica of the Statue of Liberty erected by the Chinese students in Tiananmen Square. Paradox 1: The rulers rolled their tanks across the square that symbolizes Peace. Paradox 2: The ruled erected a statue honoring the foul, imperialistic, Indian-murdering empire of evil in front of the building that symbolizes Democracy. Conclusion: the rulers *and* the ruled were wrong.

The trouble is, the people of the world just don't care what enlightened philosophers think of the correctness of their behavior. Given a chance, they vote "with hands and feet" for freedom and against oppression, for the truth of their empty stomachs and against "the truth" of the Only Right And Scientific Ideology. And the nauseated Voltaires are left where they were: at the footlights, faced with the unpleasant duty of cleaning up after themselves.

STANISLAW BARANCZAK is the Alfred Jurzykowski Professor of Polish Language and Literature at Harvard University and the author of *Breathing on the Water*, a collection of essays forthcoming from Harvard University Press.



The Wrong Driver Is About to Get a Ticket (really, it isn't the policeman's fault)

Radar displays a speed, but doesn't say which car it is clocking. Who gets the ticket? It's a guess—sometimes the wrong guess.

Our engineers have prepared a full report on traffic radar. We feel every driver should have a copy. It's just off the press, written in plain English. Some of its conclusions may startle you. If you want one, it's yours free.

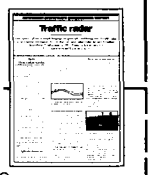
Why You Should Have This Report

As a motorist, you should know how radar works...and why radar operators don't always guess right. If they're wrong just 1% of the time, that's 100,000 undeserved tickets each year.

Call or write for your free report today.

(At Cincinnati Microwave, we make Escort, Passport, and the remarkable new miniaturized Solo radar detectors.)

FOR YOUR FREE COPY OF THIS COMPLETE REPORT MAIL COUPON OR CALL TOLL FREE
1-800-543-1608



Cincinnati Microwave
Department 609940
One Microwave Plaza
Cincinnati, Ohio 45249

Send my free copy of your private Traffic Radar Report

Name

Address

City

State, Zip

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His Master's Voice

By Sven Birkerts

Poems, 1959-1979 by Frederick Seidel

(Knopf, 112 pp., $19.95, $11.95 paper)

These Days by Frederick Seidel

(Knopf, 50 pp., $18.95, $9.95 paper)

In 1961 Robert Lowell published an entirely sui generis collection titled *Imitations*, in which he not so much translated as re-created a series of poems by diverse European masters. He gave us the Lowelling of poets like Baudelaire, Rilke, Pasternak, and Montale. For the poet it was an invigorating transfusion from some of the central sources of his inspiration; for literalists it was a scandal. Needless to say, Lowell survived his bad reviews.

Two years later, in a blurb for Frederick Seidel, a young poet out of Harvard (who had, incidentally, interviewed Lowell for *The Paris Review*), the older poet wrote: "When I read him, I have envious, delighted, jolted feelings and suspect the possibilities of modern poetry have been changed." Strong words, especially from a man not given to capricious endorsements. Strange words, too, for when we read the work in question—now available in *Poems, 1959-1979*—we are struck most by its resemblance to Lowell. Indeed, the young man appears to have all but inhaled the father, the imitator, breathing his rhythms and sonorities directly into his own lines.

Consider two selections for comparison. First, the opening salvo of Seidel's "A Year Abroad":

> Holding his breath, he watched the whole wing flex
> And flex and saw the bouncing jet pods stream
> With condensation as they plowed through clouds.
> He saw the stewardess back down the aisle
> Smiling at seat belts. His lap was headlines. Now
> Another Electra and burst in two and still
> No planes were grounded.

Match this with the beginning of Lowell's "Beyond the Alps," from his groundbreaking *Life Studies* (1959) collection:

> Reading how even the Swiss had thrown the sponge
> in once again and Everest was still
> unscaled, I watched our Paris Pullman lunge
> mooning across the fallow Alpine snow.
> *O bella Roma!* I saw our stewards go
> forward on tiptoe banging on their gongs.
> Life changed to landscape. Much against my will
> I left the City of God where it belongs.

The duplication of narrative logic is obvious. And the repetition of rhythmic signature becomes so once the two passages are vocalized. The younger poet has even borrowed the quivering enjambment of "still" from his master.

Now here is the second stanza from Seidel's "1968," included originally in *Sunrise*, which won the 1980 National Book Critics Circle Award:

> A rising starlet leans her head against the tire
> Of a replica Cord,
> A bonfire of red hair out of
> Focus in the fog. Serenading her,
> A boy plucks "God Bless America" from a guitar.
> Vascular spasm has made the boy's hands blue,
> Even after hours of opium.

Set this against these lines from Lowell's "Waking in the Blue":

> The night attendant, a B.U. sophomore,
> rouses from the mare's-nest of his drowsy head
> propped on *The Meaning of Meaning*.
> He catwalks down our corridor.
> Azure day
> makes my blue window bleaker.
> Crows maunder on the petrified fairway.

I don't think the similarities need to be spelled out here.

I am not interested in carping any further on the matter of Seidel's early debt to Lowell. The fact is that many young poets take years to rid themselves of influence, and Lowell's muscular yet offhand style of delivery must have been very difficult to exorcise. Nor am I intent on questioning Lowell's judgment of Seidel: he was giving his own idiom the praise it deserved. He simply couldn't see that (to vary Auden) his admirer had *become* him. I cite these dueling passages to make a point about Seidel's poetic origins, so that the reader may gauge what a task of self-making he confronted and better assess the degree to which he has succeeded.

Seidel, then, began as Lowell, and the Lowell that he began as was, in the 1960s, owner of the most vigorous and distinctive poetic voice in America. In *Life Studies*, which came midway between the hammering religiosity of his early work and the openly public meditations of the later *History*, he had discovered a pliant, highly charged manner that could encompass material from private as well as social worlds. Lowell was striking off poem after poem that crackled with the charge of those times. As Elizabeth Bishop wrote to him in a letter, "I am green with envy of your kind of assurance." What she was referring to was Lowell's well-known family background: Bishop felt that he carried the vital energies of New England history in his genes.

The young Seidel tried, perhaps unconsciously, to capture that same referential ease, but the lines lacked any impress of authority:

> Kennedy banquet at Versailles.
> A Russian, Gagarin, in space.
> No one is here—a day
> As bleak as Boston, despite the sun.

What the distracting echoes concealed was the fact that here was a poet with a very real gift for language, with a particular ability for serving up an inward state in an arresting sensory perception.

Eventually—and perhaps inevitably—Seidel began to distance himself from the Lowellesque rhythms and enjambments. The poems in *Sunrise* show the poet trying on selves, and as a consequence the collection feels provisional. When Seidel manages to mute his master's voice, he achieves a highly finished poem that shows off his knack for the correlative image:

> How different it was to look up and see
> The train you rode on curving away from you
> On a long bend—like your child's body, part
> Of you, apart from you. It felt so odd,
> How hauntingly it straightened and disappeared.

and:

> Heartbeat, heartbeat, the heart stops—
> But shuffle and click, it's spring!
> The arterial branches disappearing in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leaves,
Swallowed like a tailor's chalk mark in the finished suit.

But when he grasps after a more tortured—and torturing—hallucinatory (or "visionary") mode, as he does in the forty-stanza title poem, the chaos overwhelms the inspiration:

Perth, Denpasar, Djakarta, Bangkok, Bom,
Bombom bay. Dogs are man's greatest invention. Dogs.
They were nice dogs. Find a bottle of Dom Pérignon in Western Australia.
Find life on Mars. Find Jesus. "You are a failya,"
The President of the United States said.

That the conceit of "Sunrise" is, in part, that a consciousness is emerging from the deeps of anesthesia does not make the 360-line excursus easier to follow.

These Days is Seidel's first book in a decade, and it is as thin as a soda cracker. I would love to say that the slimness is compensated by the uniformly high level of contents, but this is not so. Seidel remains as scattershot as he was in *Sunrise*. Moments of great power and eloquence are undercut by the inclusion of ill-judged fiascos. One closes the book wishing that the poetic talent were accompanied by a gift for self-censorship.

In these poems, Seidel seems to be marking out a more frontally autobiographical idiom for himself. The book begins with a strongly imagistic poem called "Scotland," and moves from there to several poems that again try to animate larger topical concerns:

The endangered bald eagle is soaring
Away from extinction, according to the evening news—
Good news after the news, after
The stocking masks and the blindfolds,
Contorted and disfigured nature in the dying days of oil.

But the more personal subject matter soon supervenes.

With "That Fall," Seidel first sounds the note of memory, here of adolescent sexual awakening. The poem is gripping in its primal juxtapositions; its intensities and instances of deliberate ugliness bring to mind the portraiture of Schiele:

The body on the bed is made of china,
Shiny china vagina and pubic hair.
The glassy smoothness of a woman's body!
I stand outside the open door and stare.

I watch the shark glide by . . . it comes and goes—
Must constantly keep moving or it will drown.
The mouth slit in the formless fetal nose
Gives it that empty look—it looks unborn;
It comes into the room up to the bed
Just like a dog. The smell of burning leaves,
Rose bittersweetness rising from the red,
Is what I see. I must be twelve. That fall.

Lines like these show that Seidel has found a way to handle personal subject matter on his own terms. And in the sequence of autobiographical poems that follows he combines a sure retrospective grasp of emotion with the sensory agility that has always been a part of his poetic endowment.

The strongest poem in the book is a compressed recollection of his (or the persona's) mother, titled "The Blue-Eyed Doe." Seidel writes through what strikes the reader as great inner distance about the mother's lobotomy. The distance proves to be more a result of time's eroding force than of any callousness of repression, and the effect in places is wrenching:

The pond was quite wide, but the happy dog
Swam back and forth called by the boy, then by
His sister on the other side, a log
Of love putt-putting back and forth from fry

To freeze, from freeze to fry, a normal pair
Of extremes of normal, and on and on.
The dog was getting tired; the children stare—
Their childhood's over.

Soon after this poem, however, Seidel again modulates his tone and approach, and the remainder of the book slides into a portentous and overwrought obscurity. "Aids Days," a poem in four sections, is a disastrous attempt to bring together images of power and sexual abasement. The lines range from campy porn:

The most beautiful power in the world has buttocks.
It is always a dream come true.
They are big. They are too big.
Kiss them and spank them until they are scalding.
Till she can't breathe saying oh.

to tabloid contemporanese:

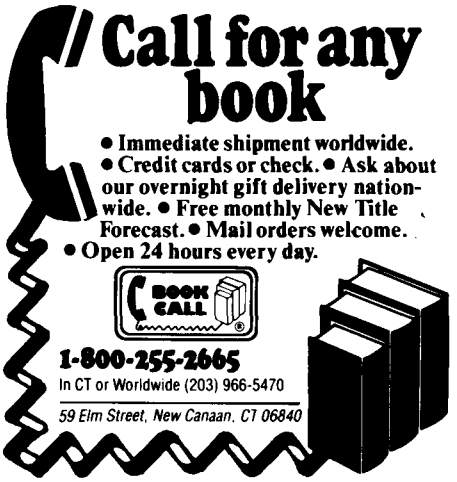
Dawn
Spreads from Gorbachev these arms talks
Aids days.
Will it spread?

If anything scuttles these poems, it's Seidel's ambition—ultimately noble—to get the lines to carry a full freight of social and private reality. The outward reach, to history and to the times, requires of the poet more than topical referentiality; it fails where there is not a sustained context. The creation of such a context in poetry is enormously difficult, which may explain why we have so few poets of social witness in our age.

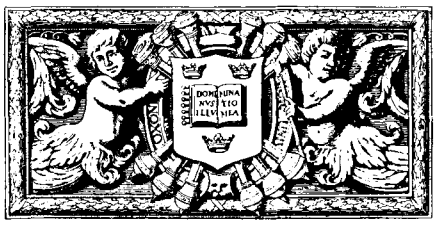
Achieving the inward reach is another matter. The poet must find a way to give dramatic form to the often vaporous elements of his privacy. The last poems in *These Days* give the strong impression of a spiritual or religious agon. The line melodies are often quite haunting, but the terms of reference are just too private for the uninitiated reader:

I don't believe in anything, I do
Believe in you, vanished particles of vapor,
Field of force,
Undressed, undimmed Invisible,
Losing muons and gaining other ones,
Counterrotations with your
Robed arms raised out straight to each side
In a dervish dance of eyes closed ecstacy,
Tireless, inhuman,
Wireless technology
Of a ghost,
Of a spinning top on its point,
Of a tornado perspiring forward a few miles an hour
Uprooting everything and smelling sweetly like a lawn.

This passage is perhaps the most lucid

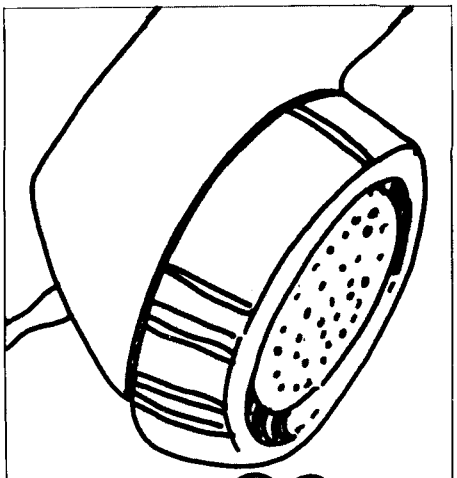

Call for any book
• Immediate shipment worldwide.
• Credit cards or check. • Ask about our overnight gift delivery nationwide. • Free monthly New Title Forecast. • Mail orders welcome.
• Open 24 hours every day.
BOOK CALL
1-800-255-2665
In CT or Worldwide (203) 966-5470
59 Elm Street, New Canaan, CT 06840

Residential Summer Study Program in
OXFORD UNIVERSITY
for High School Students
Faculty includes:
Oxford Dons • Five Rhodes Scholars



Economics • Speech • Writing • Drama
Film Studies • Science • Politics • Law
THE OXFORD TRADITION
Box 250328 • Columbia Univ. Station
New York, NY 10025
(212) 932-3049 • (800) 828-8349

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



THE NEW REPUBLIC SUBSCRIBER SERVICE IS ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY.

Do you have any questions about payments? Change of address? Delivery or other subscription problems?

Just pick up your phone and dial our toll-free hotline at

800-274-6686
(In Co: 303-447-9330)

Our operators are specially trained to provide you with quick, efficient subscription service.

For most efficient service, please have a copy of your latest magazine handy. If you have a question concerning payment, please have a copy of your cancelled check in front of you so we can quickly resolve your problem over the phone.

Of course, we can still handle your business by mail if you prefer. Simply send us a copy of your address label from the front of your last magazine and your change of address or other correspondence to:

THE NEW REPUBLIC
P.O. Box 56515
Boulder, CO 80322-6515

Request for new subscriptions, renewals of current subscriptions and gift subscriptions should also be sent to the address above.

By phone or by mail, TNR Subscriber Service has never been easier.

and available of the more spiritually oriented sections. Elsewhere Seidel succumbs to a kind of repetitive chanting all too reminiscent of Eliot's *shantih* invocations in *The Waste Land*:

I cannot see.
I will not wake though it's a dream.
I move my head from side to side.
I cannot move.

Seidel's gifts and limitations collide in such a way that the reader constantly longs for more than he gets. In reaching for so much—for historical and spiritual synthesis—the poet may be ignoring what is his to give. The best of the work quickens with sharp perception the material long seasoned in memory. What lives in *These Days* are those days.

SVEN BIRKERTS is the author of *The Electric Life: Essays on Modern Poetry* (Morrow).

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

that the organization "Egypt's Revolution," which attacked some Israeli diplomats, is "virtually untouchable" because its "senior figure" is the elder son of Gamal Abdul Nasser. All the implicated members of this organization have been jailed, and their public trials have been under way since their arrest. As for Khalid Abdul Nasser, the son of the former Egyptian president, he was indicted in absentia, and Egypt has been vigorously seeking his extradition.

MOHAMMED WAHBY
Washington, D.C.

The writer is the director of the press office of the Embassy of Egypt.

The editors reply:

Minister Wahby's words are welcome, but he evades the main issue we raised: the depth of the Egyptian elite's commitment to a real peace with Israel and its citizens. On this the record is dispiriting. Egypt's privileged and powerful have largely distanced themselves from Sadat's peace, and they deride the man who made it. Minister Wahby has no comment about our observation that Suleiman Khater, the mass murderer of Israeli tourists in the Sinai, has been virtually canonized by Egyptian intellectuals, or about the expulsion of Mona Gamal al-Din from the Egyptian filmmakers' union as punishment for attending the Jerusalem Film Festival. To the extent that Egyptian academics and intellectuals still risk becoming pariahs if they travel to Israel, Egyptian society maintains an effective boycott against its peace partner. Minister Wahby's claim that Egypt has made sacrifices on account of the treaty ignores the $3 billion a year in aid the United States has extended on precisely that account—aid that this magazine, by the way, has consistently supported.

Reading your rights

To the editors:

In "McLibraries" (February 26) Stephen Akey correctly observes that budgetary declines have precipitated a parallel decline in the quality of public library book collections, as library administrations rush headlong toward the titillation of the lowest common denominator of the reading public.

To stem the erosion of publicly available "real" books, libraries would do well to return to the groundwork laid down in the 1852 report of the then newly formed board of trustees of the Boston Public. To them the role to be filled by the public library was of such necessity because it was, as it remains, "of paramount importance that the means of general information should be so diffused that the largest number of persons should be induced to read and understand questions going down to the foundation of social order, which are constantly presenting themselves, and which we, as a people, are constantly required to decide, and do decide, either ignorantly or wisely."

WILLIAM LEE KINGERY
Lagrange, Georgia

The writer is assistant director of the Troup-Harris-Coweta Regional Library.

Auden's sermon

To the editors:

Sara Mosle needn't worry that the Vicar's Sermon from *The Dog Beneath the Skin* will be banished from the main text of Auden's *Collected Works* and left in the coventry of the notes and appendices ("Play Wystan for Me," February 26). Auden originally wrote and published the piece as a separate prose poem, and republished it as a separate prose poem after dropping it from *The Dog*. It will be published again as a separate work in the volumes of *Poems* in the collected edition, preserved in the form Auden chose when he first wrote it and when he reconsidered it many years later.

It was Auden's collaborator Christopher Isherwood who embedded the sermon into the last scene of *The Dog*, but it was Auden himself who took it out when he and Isherwood realized how much they disliked that final scene and its easy claims to political virtue.

EDWARD MENDELSON
New York, New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BUDAPEST DIARIST

Spring cleaning

NOT LONG AGO IT WAS IMPOSsible to imagine feeling a stab of compassion for the Hungarian Communist (now Socialist) Party, yet there I was at 11:45 on election night at the Budapest party headquarters caught off guard by a tiny bat squeak of sympathy. The two men sitting behind the table fielding desultory questions about their loss weren't the worst of the ancien régime, of course. Party President Rezsö Nyers, shrunken and gray in the standard-issue brown polyester suit and tie, his hand occasionally ghosting across his forehead as if he were brushing away a cobweb, was one of the leading reformers in the late sixties, an architect of the new economic mechanism, which brought a modicum of pluralism to the country. Next to him, massive in an open shirt, with each feature slightly oversized—large eyes, large bags beneath them, full lips, beefy hands—sat Minister of State Imre Pozsgay. In the past everyone's favorite Communist, Pozsgay took the political risks that pushed Hungary toward democracy and then became one of its casualties. Pozsgay, who lost even his district election, was the failed example of the balancing act that Gorbachev has attempted: becoming an agent for change while retaining power. Nyers and Pozsgay tried to be as upbeat as possible, talking about being a strong opposition and all that. Then Nyers concluded: "This time will be one of penitence for the party. We will reemerge and be strong once more." I looked around. A few political hacks in gray suits talked quietly among themselves in the back. A dozing young man sat near a radio control station. Four journalists jotted down a few notes. A Hungarian friend leaned over to me, "Can you believe that these were the people who frightened the whole country?"

A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE ELECtion in the small town of Gödölö (about sixty kilometers from Budapest), Gabor Roszik, evangelical minister and politician, couldn't have been more pleased with the turnout for his last campaign appearance. It was an impressive number of people at the education center: a working-class crowd of about 600, with lots of pomade in their hair and baggy sweaters, looking a bit drugged by all the politicking. The Democratic Forum is Roszik's party, the conservative populist nationalist party steeped in the traditions of "real Hungarianness." This evening was an orgy of those traditions. The curtains opened and Roszik, wearing a traditional peasant coat flung over his shoulders, was flanked by six children on either side, and one squirming on his lap. For two hours the children sang, recited the poet Petöfi, and danced the czardas. Roszik is no country bumpkin, however, and the presence of Klaus Francke from Germany, a member of the Christian Democratic Bundestag, attested to that. The beaming Francke had a special announcement for the crowd. "As you helped us last year with the East Germans, we would like to help you with the Hungarian minority in Romania." (Applause.) Imagine, the very reason that Hungary entered World War II on the German side was to get back all that territory it lost in World War I; and now the land was being promised all over again. I buttonholed Herr Francke at the small reception for dignitaries afterward and asked what precisely Germany intended to do. Support Hungary during the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe talks, he assured me. I asked how these plans differ from what Germany did under the Ceausescu regime. He looked around to make sure that no one was in earshot. "It's not different," he whispered.

MY SUGGESTION FOR AN ENTRY IN the story problem section of the GREs would be part of the Hungarian election law. The law is stunningly confusing. When I asked four Hungarian friends to explain it to me, I received four different answers. Voters in the first round of the parliamentary elections, on March 25, received two ballots: the first was for an individual MP and the second for a regional party slate. One hundred fifty-two seats are distributed among the counties and Budapest. To submit a slate the party must represent a quarter of the region's constituents. The first round of voting is valid provided the regional turnout is at least fifty percent. So how do you find out who won? Never mind. The final total outcome won't be known anyway until the second round on April 8.

OCCASIONALLY THE CAMPAIGN seemed a little like a Hungarian version of "The Honeymooners": fights, fights, fights. Some of the battles and negotiations were pretty entertaining. One of my favorites was the elaborate discussions about the television graphics on election night. In a rare moment of unanimity, each of the twelve major parties objected to the use of the same colors to represent their percentages and presence. No one wanted red, for obvious reasons. Pink was out for the same reason. Green was rejected because the Hungarian Nazi Party, the Nylas, wore green, and yellow was dismissed because of the yellow star of communism. The color of preference was blue, but no matter how sophisticated the graphics, twelve shades of blue was impossible. So this matter, as others, was decided by a lottery.

GRAPHICS WERE EVERYWHERE IN Hungary during the past few months. Political posters were layered on every available blank wall or building. The Democratic Forum was responsible for two of the most popular: the beefy back of a Russian soldier with the caption "Comrades, This is the End"; and a trash can overflowing with pictures of Lenin, red books, and garbage with the caption "Spring Housecleaning." The Free Democrats favored color posters with their handsome faces looking out and the slogan "We know, we dare, we do." The Democratic Forum captured about twenty-five percent of the vote and the Free Democrats about twenty-one, but if there had been a vote on the best poster the Young Democrats, FIDESZ, would have won by a landslide. The Young Democrats received about 8.5 percent of the vote (though one of them, Jozseph Szájer, beat Pozsgay in his home district of Sopron). The FIDESZ poster was of two black-and-white photographs. The photo on top is a grainy close-up of Brezhnev and Honecker poised in an intimate kiss. The bottom photo shows an attractive young couple kissing. The caption in the middle: "*Tessék Választani*"—"You have the choice."

OF ALL THE GROUPS OF MONitors and poll watchers—the Council of Europe, the Helsinki Commission, the National Endowment for Democracy—perhaps the most egregious were the young Republicans with NED. At a reception a few days before the election, a small group of them clustered together adopting the pious and courageous tones of missionaries on their way to the bush. Their assumption seemed to be that democratic maturity is measurable. America, robust and superior in middle age, is better than Hungary, still crawling around on all fours. I thought of these guardians of our adult democracy on election day, as I watched Hungarians vote with dignity, common sense, and a guarded but genuine faith that voting is meaningful. I wondered if in our maturity we also have lost a sense of wonder and hope.

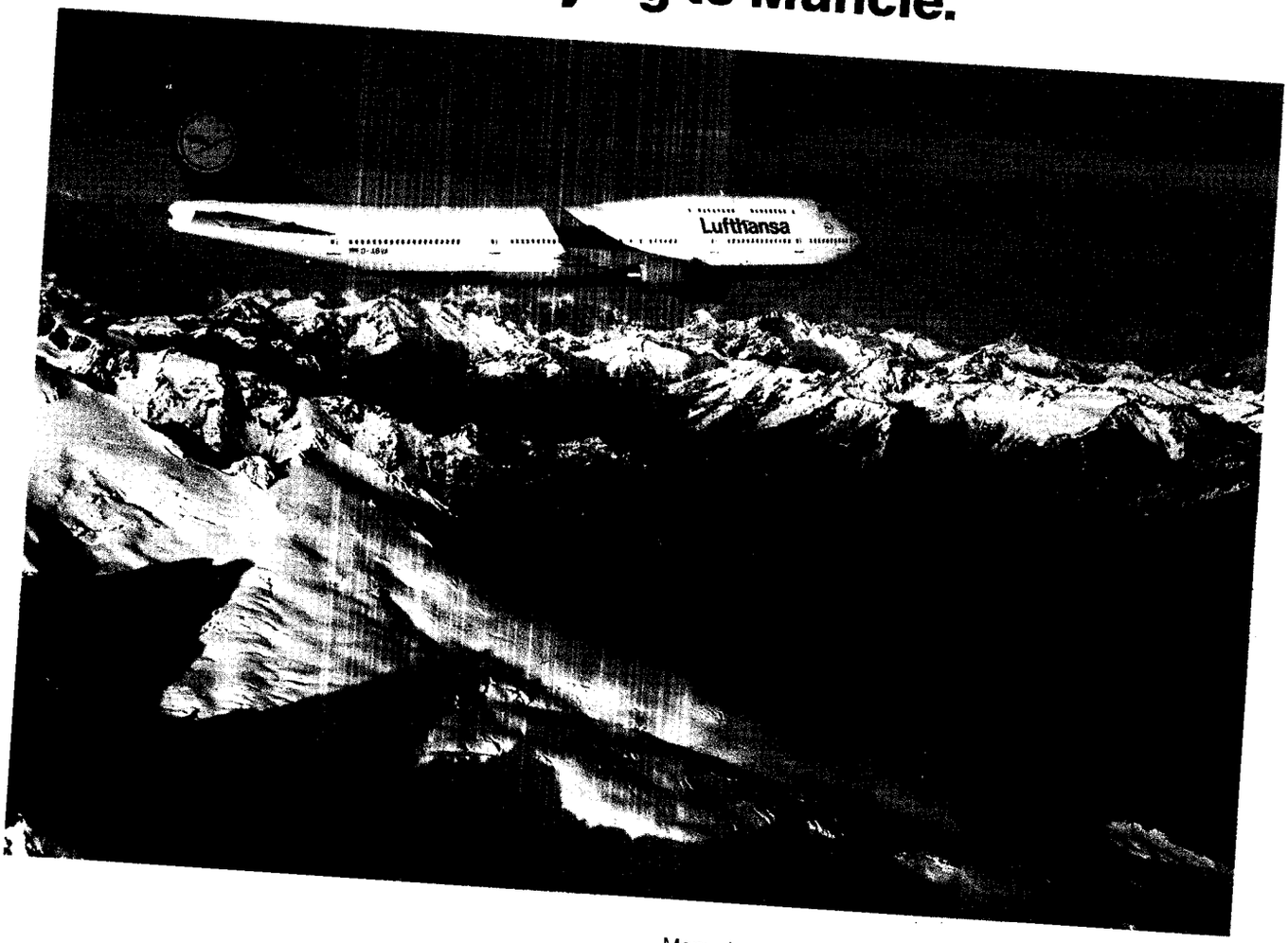
MARIANNE SZEGEDY-MASZAK

Marianne Szegedy-Maszak is a free-lance journalist who covers Hungary.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LIBRARY
Big Sandy, Texas

Why flying to Munich is considerably different than flying to Muncie.



Many domestic airlines have begun to fly across the Atlantic. But an airline used to shorter flights still has much to learn about travelling overseas.

On longer flights, passengers expect not just more service, but a different level of service. Food becomes far more important: ordinary airline meals just won't do. The environment has to be equally comfortable for working or sleeping, and cabin attendants must be consistently sensitive to every passenger's needs, for every hour of the trip.

In short, a trip to Munich shouldn't feel like a long trip to Muncie.

That's why we suggest, when you're flying to Germany and beyond, take the airline that understands longer flights.

People expect the world of us.

Lufthansa

Lufthansa is a participant in the mileage programs of United, Delta, USAir and Continental/Eastern. See your Travel Agent for details.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED